

Czechoslovak Foreign Policy, 1989-1992:
The Problems of Translating Ideas into Policy

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ABSTRACT

Czechoslovak Foreign Policy, 1989-1992: The Problems of Translating Ideas into Policy

The history of Czechoslovakia is the contest of individual will against the larger, deterministic forces of the international system. From before the creation of the country in 1918 to its disintegration at the end of 1992, Czechoslovakia's survival was predicated on the stability of the international system. Partly because of the country's geographical location, Czechoslovak thinking has been characterised by a tendency towards what can be broadly called 'humanism', and was evident particularly in the writings and politics of Tomáš Masaryk and Václav Havel.

This thesis examines the 30-month period of Czechoslovak foreign policy from the loss of Communist control in December 1989 to the June 1992 election, the results of which foretold the country's disintegration and after which the two key figures in foreign policy left public office. The thesis examines the problems of translating a series of ideas which it terms 'civic' into political practice. These ideas are drawn from the writings of Czechoslovak dissidents in the 1970s and 1980s and which, when they entered public office, they maintained had become even more appropriate.

The thesis begins by placing the tension between ideas and systemic pressures in Czechoslovak foreign policy in its pre-1989 historical context. Then, after establishing the civic ideas which formed the intellectual basis for the post-Communist foreign policy, it considers the obstacles in their implementation in five aspects of Czechoslovak foreign policy. These are: the nature and structure of foreign policy decision-making; views on the unification of Germany and the moral reconstruction of bilateral relations; transformation of ties with the Soviet Union and socialist bloc institutions; the geopolitical, cultural and economic bases for regional cooperation; and proposals for creating a second 'New Europe'.

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INTRODUCTION

IDEALS IN CLASH WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Few countries have had their historical development contoured by relative geographic size and location as much as Czechoslovakia. A small country, even though endowed with some natural resources, an advanced industrial base and an educated and talented people,¹ it was more a consumer than a producer of international order, and often one of the first victims of its convulsions.

The breakup of Czechoslovakia in 1993 now allows for its history to be studied in its entirety. That history can be seen as the synthesis of interrelated but competing influences which come to the heart of the study of international relations: the contest of the free will to pursue national aims, hopes and mission against the systemically determined conditions of size, resources and location.²

This struggle was particularly accentuated in the case of Czechoslovakia. The country's geographic location made it central to the struggle for power in Europe. A lizard-like country with its nose nudging Bavaria, its head and shoulders nestled between Germany and Austria, and its body and tail stretching between the lengths of Poland and Hungary to Ukraine, Czechoslovakia always occupied vital geopolitical and strategic space. The territory comprising the Czech Lands of Bohemia and Moravia have been strategically and economically important to Europe

¹ Halford J. Mackinder described the Czechoslovaks as having 'the most extraordinary political capacity'. *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1962), p. 159.

² For the different terms used to describe this tension, particularly in the context of foreign policy analysis, see Walter Carlsnaes, 'The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis', *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 36, No. 3 (September 1992), pp. 245-70; and generally, Alexander E. Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations', *International Organization* Vol. 41, No. 3 (Summer 1987), pp. 335-70.

since the earliest times when Moravia served as a primary passageway between southern and northern Europe.³

The geography and relief of the Czech Lands helped to develop its culture and polity in the face of external challenges into the late modern European era. The distinction of mountains cloaking the Czech Lands provided for natural defence and allowed for continued cultural and political evolution.⁴

Under Austrian domination, resulting from Czech defeat at the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, 'The isolated situation of the land secured [the Czech nation's] stability, and the natural concentration of its relief created a strong centre of civilisation which was able triumphantly to maintain its ground alongside the centres that competed against it, Vienna in particular'.⁵

For all the protection geography afforded the Czechs, it also made that space strategically valuable. These lands were often the site of and the prize in decisive battles and conquests in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The 1805 Battle of Austerlitz, or Slavkov, in Moravia, saw Napoleonic victory over the Russians and the Austrians, and doused the embers of the Holy Roman Empire. Defeat of Austria at Hradec Králové east of Prague ensured Prussian dominance over the German states. So crucial was the region that the grand strategist Otto von Bismarck proclaimed 'who rules Bohemia, dominates Europe', and 'Let Bohemia, that

³ Jaromír Korčák, 'The Geopolitical Foundations of Czechoslovakia', in Karel Hoch, *et al*, *World Peace and Czechoslovakia 1919-1934* (London and Maastricht: A.A.M. Stols Ltd., 1936), p. 26.

⁴ 'Bohemia's frontier mountains were for long into the Middle Ages covered with broad belts of forest, feared by Roman and Barbarian alike. Bohemia is the one Czechoslovak land into which the Roman legions did not penetrate. This protected situation is one of the main geopolitical factors of Central Europe. It was, above all, the reason why the first more or less firmly organised Germanic kingdom - the realm of Marobud at the beginning of the first century - had its centre precisely in Bohemia'. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

fortified camp in the centre of Europe established by God, be inviolable - above all in the interest of Germany'.⁶

When Hitler boasted German prowess, he described post-*Anschluss* Czechoslovakia as held in a German vicegrip; when he feigned German insecurity, he condemned the country as a dagger or an aircraft carrier piercing the heart of the Third Reich.⁷

In addition to its strategic importance, the territory of Czechoslovakia was also valued for its natural resources and industrial potential. 'After Austria lost Silesia to Prussia in the mid-eighteenth century, the Czech lands remained the only place in the Austro-Hungarian empire with rich resources of coal. Bohemian and Moravian industrial centres were all well-connected, through rivers and railways, not only with the rest of the Empire, but with Germany and western Europe as well'.⁸ The location of brown coal in the Czech lands meant that the region was the logical area for the beginning of the industrialisation of the Austrian empire. Imperial Austria offered concessions to investors and entrepreneurs without discrimination of location, which meant that the Czech Lands were allowed to benefit from capital investment in early industrialisation.

Many countries can be said to have a special mission. Just as Czechoslovakia's location has had, if not unique then at least profound significance for Europe, so too have its founders and subsequent political leaders attributed special importance to the philosophical place of the Czechs and Czechoslovaks in humanity.

⁶ Cited, for example, in Ivan Sviták, *The Unbearable Burden of History. The Sovietization of Czechoslovakia. Volume 2: Prague Spring Revisited* (Prague: Academia, 1990), p. 3; and cited in Korčák, 'Geopolitical Foundations', p. 24.

⁷ C.A. Macartney and A.W. Palmer, *Independent Eastern Europe* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1966), p. 302.

⁸ Radoslav Selucký, 'From Capitalism to Socialism', in H. Gordon Skilling (ed.), *Czechoslovakia 1918-88*: (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 155.

Texts by leading Czech thinkers, many of whom would become the founders of the Czechoslovak state in 1918, concentrated not only on the Czech condition and on Czech aspirations. They placed these questions in broader, even universal terms. Masaryk's works included *World Revolution* and *The Road to Democracy*. His treatments of Czechoslovakia were philosophical and framed in terms of 'the meaning of its history'.⁹

Foreign (or émigré) writers continue this tradition, or perhaps simply observe the fact of the tradition's existence. Josef Korbél's authoritative study *Twentieth-Century Czechoslovakia* follows Masaryk's work with its subtitle *The Meaning of Its History*.¹⁰ Czechoslovakia's supporters and admirers have referred to its leaders in terms larger than simply as a national leader. Louis Eisenmann's interwar biography of Beneš called him *Un Grand Européen*, common parlance in the Europe of the 1990s, but unusual in the 1930s.¹¹

What is particular in Czechoslovak history about the competition between the sense of mission and the struggle against systemic forces is the intensity of each. There is a circuitous, mutually reinforcing element to these two features of Czech history. Because the Czech Lands are important European crossroads and strategic space, they have been sought and violated. This heightens Czech self-awareness and sense of national mission. At the same time, however, expressions of Czech mission, be they Hussites and Taborites, Masarykian liberalism, or Prague Spring revisionism, either challenged the status quo or impeded the expansionist designs of neighbours who did not share or appreciate Czech humanism.

⁹ For works by and on Masaryk, see bibliography, part 2.

¹⁰ Josef Korbél, *Twentieth-century Czechoslovakia: The Meaning of Its History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

¹¹ Louis Eisenmann, *Un Grand Européen: Edouard Beneš* (Paris: Paul Hartman, 1934).

As a result of the struggle between the national mission of humanism and the conditions of the international system, the history of Czechoslovakia has often been depicted as predetermined. A slogan of the Czechs is 'O nás, bez nás a proti nám': about us, without us and against us. The slogan was even referred to by the first US government official to address a post-Communist Czechoslovak audience.¹² This contrasts with the proactive elements of the national thinking and ethos, but is also a result of asserting the Czech national mission. Because of the position of the territory comprising Czechoslovakia, efforts to extol humanist values have, in fact, made the maintenance of national independence more difficult.

Consequently, the outcomes of, and turning points in, Czechoslovak history appear to be depicted as distinct from human initiative, as if part of a calendar or the result of the climate. Crucial events or crises in Czechoslovak history are associated with months: October (1918) the foundation of the Republic; March (1939) the Nazi German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia; February (1948) the Soviet-inspired Communist coup; August (1968) the Warsaw Pact intervention which aborted the Action Programme; November (1989) the Velvet Revolution and the downfall of Communist rule from within and of Soviet hegemony from without.¹³ Similarly, its history is referred to by the symbolic number 8 in crucial

¹² James Baker, Speech to Charles University, 7 February 1990, United States Information Service, US Embassy (London), mimeo, p. 3.

¹³ See Sviták, *Unbearable* (Vol. 1), p. 137. While Sviták challenges the determinism of the months, he nevertheless calculates twice as many national catastrophes as triumphs.

Following the association of months, Czechoslovaks often use 'November' to describe the protests of 1989. See Oldřich Tůma, 'Listopad 1989 v memoárech', *Soudobé dějiny* I/2-3 (1994), pp. 374-80.

years such as 1618, 1918, 1938, 1948 and 1968, all but one of which 'denote the insecure condition of the nation's statehood'.¹⁴

Czech historians have referred to the country as the 'Doomed Democracy'¹⁵, and its fate in terms of 'The Unbearable Burden of History'.¹⁶ Specific events have been characterised by climatic descriptions, as if they are the result of systemic conditions beyond the control of humans. Zdeněk Mlynář's English-language account of the crushing of the 1968 reform movement was called 'Nightfrost in Prague'. One scholar labels a collection of documents 'Wintertime in Prague'; another calls the same event the 'Interrupted Revolution', perhaps reflecting the sense of incompleteness and disruption of national paths due to influences from without.¹⁷

It is not the contention of this thesis that Czechoslovakia's history, geographic location or post-communist experience is strictly unparalleled. Its experiences, particularly in foreign policy, can be compared with other medium-sized landlocked European states. There can be little doubt, however, that Czechoslovakia has often been an excellent international citizen but an early sacrifice in systemic crises. Czechoslovakia has also been, disproportionately to its size, a significant producer of ideas. Its leaders have seen the Czechoslovak 'problem' as having European, even

¹⁴ George Liska, *Fallen Dominoes, Reviving Powers: Germany, the Slavs, and Europe's Unfinished Agenda* (Washington: The Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute, 1990), p. 39.

¹⁵ Věra Olivová, *The Doomed Democracy: Czechoslovakia in a Disrupted Europe, 1914-1938* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1972).

¹⁶ Sviták, *Unbearable*.

¹⁷ Mlynář's original Czech-language account had the less deterministic title *Mraz přichází z Kremlu* (Nightfrost from the Kremlin); Zdeněk Mlynář, *Nightfrost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism* (New York: Karz Publishers, 1980); Robin A. Remington (ed.), *Winter in Prague: Documents on Czechoslovak Communism in Crisis* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969); and H. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). This is not to suggest that any author wholly attributes the outcomes of Czechoslovak history to actions external to the country. See Skilling, pp. 3-8.

universal significance, and that they offer ideas and solutions which they believe to be applicable more widely.

The humanist tendencies in Czech thinking, however, are not strictly idealist, the unlimited belief in the ability of ideas to effect outcomes. Throughout Czech history, force and resistance have been allied with this thinking.

Masaryk often referred to the legacy and example of the Taborites and General Jan Žižka. They were fighters; they fought for a cause, and perhaps a noble one, but fighters they were nevertheless. Historian Korbelt has Masaryk ask figuratively in 1918: 'Had not the Taborites reconciled the gospel of Christianity with the necessity of arms in its defense? Masaryk too, would bridge that contradiction....The inevitable question [for Masaryk was] would the nation and its leaders be willing and capable of picking up the thread of history, of fulfilling the humanist ideals that were Masaryk's vision of his country's destiny?'¹⁸

The Czechoslovaks proved unable to withstand outside pressures. This is not to say that their allies did not also share responsibility for these outcomes. But the ultimate form of national endurance and deterrence is what some have suggested is a 'willingness to suffer'.¹⁹ A study of Czechoslovak foreign policy from the interwar period onwards suggests that Czechoslovaks lacked the willingness to suffer. Instead they rested on the belief and expectation that the values for which they stood were universally shared. Consequently, while they might be threatened, they would either not find themselves isolated or defeated.

¹⁸ Korbelt, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 40.

¹⁹ Steven Rosen, 'War Power and the Willingness to Suffer', in Bruce M. Russett, (ed.), *Peace, War, and Numbers* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1972).

Czechs may characterise themselves in terms of Jaroslav Hašek's literary character the 'good soldier Švejk'.²⁰ Švejk enrolls in the Austro-Hungarian Army to wage the Great War. Through lethargy and ineptitude, Švejk subverts his commander's orders. The question is whether Švejk was naturally incompetent or whether his clumsiness and idiocy was a deliberate form of passive resistance. The question and nature of Czech resistance is asked at crucial points in its history. An historian of Czech origin entitles the Czech response to the German occupation 'The Failure of a National Resistance', while an account of the Soviet takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948 is entitled 'Passive Revolution'.²¹ Josef Škvorecký's stories and novels such as 'The Bass Saxophone' and *The Engineer of Human Souls*, mention acts of resistance, but the overwhelming priority for his characters are jazz and the opposite sex. One of his works is entitled *The Cowards*.

Physical resistance to communism was often comparable to the purported passive resistance to Nazism. It differs, first, because there was, at first, genuine support for communism among the many parts of Czechoslovak society. However, even when the disadvantages of communism became evident, the resistance was at best passive.

These considerations are not unique to Czechoslovakia; nor, indeed, are they unique to a particular time in Czechoslovak history. The goal of this thesis is to examine the interplay between the country's philosophy and the challenges that existed beyond the leadership's immediate control in the 30-month period from the Velvet Revolution to the June 1992

²⁰ Jaroslav Hašek, *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války* (Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1990). See Cecil Parrot's introduction to the English version for a qualification of Švejk's representativeness of the Czechs. *The Good Soldier Švejk* (London: Penguin, 1973), p. xv.

²¹ Vojtech Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi Rule: The Failure of a National Resistance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972); and Jon Bloomfield, *Passive Revolution: Politics and the Czechoslovak Working Class, 1945-8* (London: Allison and Busby, 1979).

elections which made the breakup of the country certain and after which President Václav Havel and Foreign Minister Jiří Dienstbier left public office.

At the same time, the thesis argues that the nature of post-communist foreign policy is deeply rooted in the philosophical nature of the country. This philosophy is admirable but it also tends to ignore realities. It mimics the contention of Samuel Huntington that 'the primary problem of politics is the lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change'.²² In post-communist Czechoslovakia intellectuals stayed in office after the 1989 revolution longer and more effectively than elsewhere in the region (although they would be defeated or marginalised there too), and thus had the opportunity to try to bring political institutions in line with the social changes that they were so instrumental in fostering.

Once in power after the November 1989 Revolution, the Czechoslovak dissidents sought to translate into foreign policy a series of ideas which this thesis calls 'civic'. Formulated by the dissidents during the 1970s and 1980s, these ideas argued that truth, morality, and responsibility could overcome existing power structures. They contended that, in domestic and international political life, power and security need not come from the powerlessness and insecurity of others.

The thesis begins by tracing the tension between Czechoslovak ideals and the 'realities' of world politics. It does so by looking at the major turning points in Czechoslovak history and their relation to systemic events. These include the efforts to create the Czechoslovak state; the nature of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938) and its foreign policy; the crises of Munich and March 1939; the wartime and postwar balancing act between East and West; the Communist assumption

²² Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 5.

of power in February 1948 and rule until 1960; reforms of the 1960s culminating in the Prague Spring and Warsaw Pact intervention in August 1968; post-intervention 'normalisation' and the rise of dissent; and, finally, the anti-Communist revolution of November 1989.

The second chapter examines the personalities of two key post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy-makers, Václav Havel and Jiří Dienstbier. Czechoslovak dissident ideas are examined and their post-communist applicability established to determine the form and content of their civic foreign policy.

In order both to explain how post-Communist foreign policy was made and to demonstrate problems of policy implementation, the third chapter examines the sources and processes of foreign policy decision-making.

The next four chapters provide policy cases studies. These are defined by countries and regions in recognition of Czechoslovakia's need to direct its foreign policy towards specific actors. The fourth chapter considers Czechoslovakia's relations with Germany in which the post-Communist Czechoslovakia leadership not only discounted geopolitical and historical pressures but also sought to create a new basis for relations by apologising for Czechoslovak crimes towards Germans.

Chapter 5 demonstrates that although humanist values are similarly extended to the Soviet Union, the Czechoslovak leadership showed itself sensitive to changes in Soviet policy.

Numerous initiatives for regional cooperation, particularly the Visegrád Group are examined in chapter 6 to illustrate how dissident experience and ethos was necessary for the process and how Czechoslovakia recognised and used geographic and systemic pressures.

Chapter 7 concerns the central plank of post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy: the ambitious programme to redefine relations in Europe by eliminating geopolitics. While Czechoslovakia sought the

elimination of military alliances as part of that process, the country ultimately resorted to an antithetical policy of seeking military alliances and security guarantees and of adopting traditional realist language to support that claim.

Through these aspects of post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy this thesis will examine the problems of translating into policy the Czechoslovak dissident ideas of civic politics. It is necessary first, however, to place post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy into its historical context.

CHAPTER 1

IDEALS AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM: CZECHOSLOVAKIA FROM ITS CONCEPTION TO THE VELVET REVOLUTION

THE CREATION OF A STATE THROUGH THE POWER OF IDEAS

The foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, by no means preordained, was a combination of international circumstances and the work of its founders. The Russian revolution and the ideology of Wilson's Fourteen Points, in addition to the Great War itself, provided for 'a favorable reception of the efforts of smaller nations for independence'.¹ The Czechoslovak leadership clearly used these conditions for the achievement of their political goals and the creation of the state in 1918 was very much the result of their endeavours. Such human achievement should have augured well for the survival of the Czechoslovak state.

A contribution to the creation of the state came from Masaryk's own philosophy. As was so often the case, his work on this issue was not directed specifically at Czechoslovakia but at a universal problem which he sought to rectify. He addressed some of these issues during the First World War when he gave the founding speech of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in 1915.² His view of how the small nation could achieve victory against superior odds was not characterised by political or military strategy, the creation of alliances or general scheming. Rather, it was a call to humanism, to victory through decency and diligence.

¹ Radomír Luža, *The Transfer of the Sudeten Germans: A Study of Czech-German Relations, 1933-1962* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1994), p. 27.

² T.G. Masaryk, 'The Problem of Small Nations in the European Crisis', in R.W. Seton-Watson, *Masaryk in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), pp. 135-52. See also, T.G. Masaryk, *Problém malého národa* (Praha: NEUTRALITA, 1990).

Specifically regarding the Czechs, in his 1895 work *Česká otázka* (The Czech Question), Masaryk denounced 'the mendicancy and weakness of will of our public life'. Of politicians he said 'Because they do not know how to be lions, they become foxes; because they do not know how to be heroes, they become lackeys and promote themselves by lackey-like cunning'. The 'oppressed, small and weak' nation, however, was not forced to rely on 'Machiavellianism and lackeyism', according to Masaryk, but could attain its aims honourably through 'work' and 'struggle'.

Not by violence, but peacefully, not by the sword but by the plough, not by blood but by work, not by death but by life for the sake of life - this is the answer to the Czech genius, that is the sense of our history and the legacy of our great predecessors.³

It was in this context that Masaryk recognised and drew upon two competing tendencies in Czech action. He called one the 'invincible gallantry' of Czech military heroes like the Hussite leaders Žižka and Prokop, those who took up arms to support the cause.⁴ The other strand, which Masaryk considered more enduring and widespread, came from moral and religious figures of Czech history, such as Hus, Komenský and the Bohemian Brethren.

Whatever mission Masaryk believed the Czechs to have, and whatever means he prescribed to achieve their aims, the creation of a Czechoslovak state was not preordained. Certainly, the Czechoslovak state benefitted from the general principle of national self-determination. Expounded by US President Woodrow Wilson, national self-determination was to form the basis of peace in the wake of the First World War, and

³ H. Gordon Skilling, 'Lions or Foxes: Heroes or Lackeys?', in Skilling (ed.), pp. 3-4.

⁴ For a brief historical account, see J.V. Polišenský, *History of Czechoslovakia in Outline*, [originally published 1947] (Prague: Bohemia International, 1991), ch. V. See also Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

was pronounced on 8 January 1918 as part of the Wilsonian peace programme of the Fourteen Points.

Nevertheless, the breakup of Austria-Hungary, an obvious prerequisite for the creation of Czechoslovakia, was not a specific American objective. The best the Fourteen Points did for Czechoslovak hopes was to offer the peoples of the Empire 'the freest opportunity of autonomous development'. This statement was wholly unsatisfactory to Masaryk, whose task was made more difficult when it became clear that none of the victorious powers thought differently from the Americans. For Masaryk to achieve his aim of an independent Czechoslovak was all the more an enormous undertaking.⁵ It is in light of this that the active and skilful diplomacy of the Czechoslovak founders can be seen to have shaped Czechoslovak history.

On 14 October 1918, Masaryk launched the Declaration of Independence. Finally, on 28 October, a 'bloodless revolution'⁶ occurred with the proclamation of independence of the independent Czechoslovak republic.

The end result of these initiatives was that Czechoslovak leaders were able to impose their demands on the peacemakers: 'The Peace Conference found itself faced, so far as the question of Czechoslovakia was concerned, with a fait accompli. The Czechoslovak State was already in existence by virtue of the will of the people at home and of the successful struggle abroad for independence - with the concurrence and support of the Allied Powers'.⁷

⁵ William V. Wallace, *Czechoslovakia* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1976), p. 114.

⁶ A.J.P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1948).

⁷ Karel Hoch, 'The Peace Conference and the Rise of the Czechoslovak Republic', in Krofta, p. 13.

The determination of the country's borders was helped by geographic factors. Just as the geographic locations of the Czech Lands at the north-south and east-west crossroads of Europe were recognised throughout history for strategic reasons, so too were they acknowledged by the Committee on Czechoslovak Questions at the Paris Peace talks. This was to the advantage of nascent Czechoslovakia. The Committee pronounced that 'Bohemia forms a natural region, clearly defined by its fringe of mountains. The mere fact that a German population has established itself in the outlying districts at a relatively recent date did not appear to the committee a sufficient reason for depriving Bohemia of its natural frontiers'. The Committee also recognised, with some foresight, that the country's national security would 'depend on geographical considerations. The chain of mountains which surrounds Bohemia constitutes a line of defence for the country. To take away this line of mountains would be to place Bohemia at the mercy of Germany'.⁸

While Czechoslovakia's new boundaries benefitted from the recognition by the Allies of such natural borders, the nascent country's leadership nevertheless had to argue for them. It also used military force to secure a border with Hungary. The result, however, was that the country emerged 'with more than adequate recognition of her territorial needs'. It was due to these successes that Czechoslovakia became a champion of the new order.⁹

In addition to the relative benefits of its geographical layout, the potential of Czechoslovakia for economic success and prosperity was high.

⁸ E.L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (eds), *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939* Third Series (London, 1949), Vol. I, p. 302, cited in Luža, *Transfer*, p. 2.

⁹ Felix John Vondracek, *The Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia 1918-1935* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), p. 43.

The industrial capacity inherited from Austro-Hungarian empire ranked Czechoslovakia among the world's ten leading industrial powers.¹⁰

The new state had certain geographic advantages but also some weaknesses. The Czech lands were allowed to retain what were considered historic borders, with the Peace Conference refusing to allow the German-speaking minorities of the northern areas to seek union with Germany and those of the south with Austria. The Delegation of the Austrian Republic to the Peace talks included representatives of the Sudeten Germans.¹¹

While Poland gained the coal-rich area of Těšín, Czechoslovakia was permitted to retain the lands south of it, thereby preserving intact the northern railroad which connected the Czech lands to Slovakia. At other points, however, the border was drawn to strategic disadvantage. 'The frontier between Czechoslovakia and Hungary was...demarcated on the basis of observing as closely as possible the principle of nationality. It is thus a frontier rather difficult of defence against possible attack'. The border arrangement also meant that Czechoslovakia would not have an East-West railway in the South.¹²

Despite some problems, on the whole Czechoslovakia was a geographically-defined country: 'A glance at the orographical map of Europe shows that no country in the interior of the Continent has such an outstanding relief as the central territories of Bohemia and Slovakia - the mountain-quadrangle of Bohemia, and the mountain-ellipse of Slovakia,'¹³ although this author also acknowledges that only three of

¹⁰ See, for example, Radoslav Selucký, 'From Capitalism to Socialism', p. 154; and John J.N. Bradley, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution: A Political Analysis* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1992), p. xiii.

¹¹ Emil Sobota, 'From Political Separatism to Political Symbiosis', in Krofta, p. 40.

¹² Hoch, 'Peace Conference', p. 16-7.

¹³ Korčák, 'Geopolitical Foundations', p. 20.

Czechoslovakia's four sides had natural frontiers, the southern being 'open'.¹⁴

Not only did Masaryk have to win over the Allies to the cause of Czechoslovakia, he had to win the Slovaks. If the realisation of a Czechoslovak state can be attributed to an idealistic realism, the creation of a Czechoslovak nation was much more idealistic. The lands which were to become Czechoslovakia were multiethnic, containing more Germans than Slovaks, as well as significant numbers of Poles, Ruthenians, and particularly Hungarians. In order to take advantage of Allied support for the principle of national self-determination, the Czech leaders, in particular, recognised the imperative to create a number of citizens substantial enough to justify a new state. That required a fusion of the two west Slavic peoples. Although the Czechs and Slovaks may be said to share relatively common language, they each had substantially different political, religious and economic orientations. The Czechs had had their own kingdom, underwent a Protestant reformation (thereby becoming a central battleground in the Thirty Years' War), and by 1914 had developed one of the most advanced industrial economies in Europe, with a large urbanised middle class. The Slovaks, by contrast, had been under nearly a millennium of Hungarian rule (with the Hungarians even using Bratislava Castle to enthrone their own monarchs), and were predominantly Catholic and largely agrarian.

The creation of a 'Czechoslovak' citizen in 1918 was notional, with the consequence that the 'full meaning of the political union of Slovaks and Czechs in 1918 was nebulous and difficult for the Czechs to grapple with or even understand. Prior to 1917 such a union had been given hardly any real consideration'.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁵ Edita Bosák, 'Slovaks and Czechs: An Uneasy Coexistence', in Skilling (ed.), p. 66

When Masaryk campaigned in 1918 in the United States for support for the creation of a Czechoslovak state, his audience was not simply American public opinion but also Slovak. To win Slovak-Americans, who constituted one-third of the whole Slovak population, to the idea of a common Czechoslovak state, he made pledges. Writing in Slovak, he promised that the new state would guarantee Slovakia 'its own administration, its own Diet, and its own courts'. He also promised that Slovak would serve as the official language 'in the schools, in government offices, and in public life generally'. The resulting Pittsburgh Agreement was signed by Masaryk signed on 30 May 1918 and promised Slovaks 'equality and autonomous development'.¹⁶ Achieving the fact of, and particularly the perception of equality between the two nations became much harder, and would show that the country was founded on a notional concept rather than a firm cultural allegiance.

Confusion over this new identity was evident from the outset of the Czechoslovak Republic. The *Declaration of the Slovak Nation* of 30 October 1918, the first political declaration of the Slovak National council, pronounced the Slovaks to be a nation as well as part of the Czechoslovak nation. This resulted in 'an enormous amount of misunderstanding, confused government policies, enmity and even tragedy' which continued as long as the duration of Czechoslovakia existed.¹⁷

Of Slovak heritage (but an American mother), born in Hodonín on the Moravian-Slovak border, living much of his adult life in Prague, Masaryk was the ideal example of this new identity. He was not, however, representative of either the experience or the thinking of much of the rest of the population.

¹⁶ Cited in Josef Kalvoda, *The Genesis of Czechoslovakia* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1986), p. 284.

¹⁷ Peter Petro, 'Slovak Literature: Loyal, Dissident and Émigré', in Skilling (ed.), p. 197.

The two peoples were not the same: 'Slovakia was clearly quite unlike the Czech lands in language, customs, religious attitudes, economy and political consciousness. After the emergence of Czechoslovakia, there were not a few Slovak politicians who accused Czech politicians of failing to pay heed to these differences, and of artfully creating the myth of a single Czechoslovak nation, by inventing a Czechoslovak language and a distinct Czechoslovak literary tradition'.¹⁸

Ignoring the tenuous foundations of the Czechoslovak identity, as seems to have been the case right to the end of the Czechoslovak Federation, has been detrimental to the country. As much as the creation of the country was an achievement over conditions that suggested it should not have been created let alone flourished, its history thereafter would test the ability of its leadership to navigate in hostile seas.

THE INTERWAR YEARS

The new Czechoslovak state was challenged by numerous problems, internally and externally. Internally, the new country replicated the multiethnic composition of its predecessor, the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first Czechoslovak census, taken in 1921, put the total population at 13 600 000. The Czechs were the largest group, accounting for 6 747 000, which put them at just over 50 per cent of the total population. Germans were the next largest ethnic group at 23.4 per cent, outnumbering the Slovaks who constituted only 15 per cent. Hungarians and Carpatho-Rusyns numbered 5.6 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively, and other minorities made up the rest.¹⁹

¹⁸ Frederick M. Barnard, 'Political Culture: Continuity and Discontinuity', in Skilling (ed.), *Czechoslovakia 1918-88*, p. 134.

¹⁹ Paul Robert Magocsi, 'Magyars and Carpatho-Rusyns', in Skilling, (ed.), p. 105.

In a spirit of relative democracy and humanism, its leaders sought to make Czechoslovakia the Switzerland of Central Europe. While the Slovaks, who again numbered 2 million of the country's 12 million people, or the Hungarians could be said to have had disproportionately small representation, 'The permanent participation of the German parties in the Czechoslovak parliamentary majority and in the Cabinet [was] the outcome not only of a Realpolitik on the part of the Germans, but also of the conciliatory attitude and conduct of the Czechs'.²⁰ In the first parliamentary elections, through proportional representation, the Germans received 25.6 per cent of the seats in the first Parliament.²¹ The gestures of the Czechoslovak leadership were not always accepted. Karel Kramář, one of the founders of the Republic, had invited both the Bohemian Germans and the Hungarians to participate in the new government. Both, however, refused.²² Means for representation certainly existed.

As much as the Czechoslovak leadership acknowledged the precarious internal structure of the country, so too were they aware of the fragile international surroundings in which Czechoslovakia found itself. The fledgling country was surrounded by the defeated and potentially revisionist countries of Germany, Austria and Hungary. Czechoslovakia was a product of the Versailles Peace; its survival was predicated on peace generally and the durability of the postwar Peace specifically. The country's leadership therefore pursued a foreign policy which supported that Peace and its defining principles and institutions such as collective security and the League of Nations.

²⁰ Hoch, 'Peace Conference', p. 18.

²¹ Sobota, 'Political Separatism', p. 42.

²² Vondracek, *Foreign Policy*, p. 17.

The Czechoslovak leaders followed this route not only out of necessity but also because they believed in these principles. The essence and origins of interwar Czechoslovak foreign policy is attributable quite neatly to Edvard Beneš. This is not simply a result of Beneš having served as Foreign Minister uninterruptedly from the foundation of the Republic in 1918 to Masaryk's retirement as President in 1935 (when Beneš succeeded him to that Office). According to Beneš's wartime personal assistant, historian Edward Taborský, it was Beneš who made foreign policy in the First Republic. Even though the democratic structures of the country ensured that the Foreign Minister was responsible to the Cabinet, and the Cabinet in turn to Parliament, Beneš 'became the deciding voice in foreign policy'²³ and 'really personified the nation's foreign policy'.²⁴

Czechoslovakia's foreign policy in the interwar period rested substantially therefore with Beneš and it was his liberal Europeanism which provided the guiding principles. He undertook to demonstrate his personal and Czechoslovakia's national commitment to liberal practices in the continent: 'He emerged as a major figure at the League of Nations, where he served six times as chairman of its Council, once as president of its Assembly, and several times as rapporteur on important issues brought before the League. In his seventeen years as head of the Foreign Ministry, he made meaningful contributions to most major international conferences'.²⁵

Czechoslovakia adhered religiously to the principles of the League, collective security, and supersession of force with arbitration. The country 'pursued a policy of international loyalty' and did its 'best

²³ Edward Taborský, *President Edvard Beneš: Between East and West, 1938-1948* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), p. 2.

²⁴ Wallace, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 157.

²⁵ Taborský, *President*, p. 2.

sincerely to allay tension wherever it existed'. Writing in 1934, its intellectual representatives said that Czechoslovakia's 'rise and existence [were] not merely the outcome of a victory but represented an important moral value'.²⁶

The ethos of the new country may have been encapsulated by one of its two most prominent interwar authors, Karel Čapek, whose sense of civic responsibility has been equated to his commitment to his literary work.²⁷

Although Beneš was said to be optimistic or idealistic, he was also 'a realist who knew that optimism could survive only if the conditions that had nurtured it could be maintained or improved upon' and he sought to achieve this aim in tangible forms once the series of Peace Treaties were finalised.²⁸

To prevent revisionism, Beneš undertook to create a series of defensive alliances. Czechoslovakia completed treaties first with Yugoslavia in August 1920 and then with Romania in April 1921; those two completed the alliance triangle with a bilateral treaty in June 1921.

The intention was to include Poland in the structure as well. This was perhaps the most promising of the successor-state treaties as Masaryk's conception of relations with Warsaw extended as far as a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation.

With the rise of Hitler in Germany, the danger of revisionist claims on Czechoslovakia intensified. The Czechoslovak leadership was proactive in the face of this threat. Czechoslovakia renewed its support, both in principle and in practice, of the League and collective security. As if representative of the spirit of his foreign policy, Beneš was in the Chair

²⁶ Hoch, 'Peace Conference', p. 19.

²⁷ Igor Hájek, 'Traditions of Czech Literature: Curses and Blessings', in Skilling (ed.), p. 180.

²⁸ Wallace, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 157.

of the Plenary session of the League which moved to impose sanctions against Italy for its invasion of Abyssinia.

Regardless of Czechoslovakia's faith in collective security, it also sought to expand its alliance system of the Little Entente. Prague took advantage of Paris's interest to counterbalance German revisionism with an 'eastern Locarno' by securing an alliance in 1935 which pledged French military assistance in case of attack on Czechoslovakia.

Not satisfied with a security guarantee from Europe's preeminent land force, Beneš sought to tie the Soviet Union into the system as well. In the context of the treaty of mutual assistance signed between France and the USSR on 2 May 1945, Beneš completed one between Prague and Moscow two weeks later.

An important caveat was included in the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement, namely, that the USSR would only come to Czechoslovakia's aid in the event of French assistance being provided first. A practical geographic caveat arose as well. The Soviet Union shared no common border with Czechoslovakia through which to transport troops and Soviet forces dispatched to its assistance would have to transverse either Polish or Romanian territory. The Polish government was more hostile to the Soviet Union than to Germany and was known not to tolerate the idea of Soviet forces on its territory, even in transit. Studies of Romanian documents showed the Soviet Union expressly declined transporting military forces through Romania.²⁹

Historians have accused Beneš of an undue optimistic trust in the system of collective security.³⁰ His unflagging belief in common Western values probably prevented him from assessing how the changing distribution of power in Europe would force his allies to adopt self-

²⁹ Jiří Hochman, *The Soviet Union and the Failure of Collective Security, 1934-1938* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), esp. pp. 194-201.

³⁰ See, for example, Luža, *Transfer*, as summarised in the foreword, p. xvii.

serving policies which threatened his state. Referring to Beneš as 'western', Korbelt writes that he had 'a profound faith in the values of humanism and Western cultures' and was 'a democrat dedicated to the evolutionary progress of justice and liberty'.³¹

At the same time, his policies were proactive and constructive. The same historians who attack Beneš's naivety also acknowledge that 'To the eve of Munich...no other Central European state appeared to possess sturdier guarantees of its territorial integrity and national sovereignty than democratic Czechoslovakia'.³² The Czechoslovak government did not rely exclusively on the military prowess of its larger allies. It undertook to build extensive defenses along its borders with Germany, and drew on its vast and sophisticated arms industry.

This meant that 'the defenses of Czechoslovakia would have proved more formidable in 1938 than in those of Poland and in 1939'.³³ In retrospect, rather than simply being a one-way consumer of security, Czechoslovakia actually provided a substantial amount of potential military and diplomatic support to its Western democratic allies. It was only a question of those allies reading and assessing the situation in a similar fashion to Czechoslovakia.

Geography, however, scuttled Czechoslovakia's adherence to, and propagation of, international morality as well as its efforts to create an alliance system. 'Czechoslovakia's geo-political placing did not help matters. Neither one nor the other of its mighty neighbours showed any readiness to understand or even tolerate its pluralist institutions or the integrity of its democratic spirit'.³⁴ Among the earliest lessons was

³¹ Korbelt, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 129.

³² Foreword, Luža, p. xvii.

³³ Gerhard L. Weinberg, 'Munich After 50 Years', *Foreign Affairs* 67 (Fall 1988), p. 174.

³⁴ Barnard, 'Political Culture', p. 136.

Poland's designs to expand its possessions around Těšín in the northeast of Moravia.

The internal as well as external stability of Czechoslovakia suffered with the advent of the Great Depression. By 1933 the country had 738,000 unemployed.³⁵ The German minority was particularly affected as it was the industrial and consumer goods sectors that contracted most and they were located predominantly in the German areas. The resulting economic condition of the Sudeten Germans 'contributed to anti-Czech resentments and rendered them receptive to Nazi ideology'.³⁶ These sentiments both fed the success of, and were exploited by, Czechoslovakia's indigenous National Socialist movement, headed by German Konrad Henlein.

THE FAILURE OF MUNICH

As Great Powers, Britain and France believed they understood their role in maintaining the international status quo. This involved conceding Germany's demands to the incorporation of German-speaking peoples and their areas in Czechoslovakia.

For all the explicit agreements to defend Czechoslovakia against aggression, in July 1938 the French government issued a 'formal and explicit, but confidential, warning to Prague...that under practically no circumstances would it come to the defense of its Czechoslovak ally'.³⁷ French military intelligence also concluded that Czechoslovakia was not

³⁵ Bradley, *Velvet Revolution*, p. xiii. The population was approximately 14 million.

³⁶ Selucký, 'From Capitalism', p. 158.

³⁷ Weinberg, 'Munich', p. 170.

position, British support for Czechoslovakia was also eroding. In June 1938, Winston Churchill told a Czechoslovak official that, despite his attacks on Prime Minister Chamberlain's appeasement policy, he might have adopted the approach were he in power.³⁹

There has been much debate on the extent to which the Soviet Union was genuinely willing to assist Czechoslovakia. Throughout the Munich crisis, the Soviet leadership made clear its willingness to support beleaguered Czechoslovakia. A particular example was the speech Soviet Foreign Minister Litvinov gave at the League of Nations on 21 September:

We intend to fulfil our obligations under the [Franco-Soviet] pact, and together with France, to afford assistance to Czechoslovakia by the ways open to us. Our War Department is ready immediately to participate in a conference with the representatives of the French and Czechoslovak War Departments, in order to discuss the measures appropriate to the moment...the Soviet Union is prepared, in accordance with the Soviet-Czech pact, to render Czechoslovakia immediate and effective aid if France, loyal to her obligations, will render similar assistance....⁴⁰

Soviet gestures, however, have been seen in retrospect, not least by many Czechoslovak participants like Táborský, as insincere on Stalin's part. French unwillingness to commit assistance to Czechoslovakia certainly justified Soviet inaction under the terms of the Treaties of Mutual Assistance. But French inaction was also exploited by Moscow as an excuse for its own inaction.

In addition to signalling the end of the Czechoslovak state, Munich was also a tragic and personal defeat for Beneš. It reversed the achievements of his pre-1918 foreign policy career, 'when he had managed

³⁹ Weinberg, 'Munich', p. 170.

⁴⁰ Jane Degras (ed.), *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy. Volume 3* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 303.

to secure representation in high international councils without having a state behind him'. With Munich, he 'had to suffer the humiliating experience of having his country's destiny decided without the benefit of consultation with him. It was an ignominious end to a diplomatic career that had begun so brilliantly'.⁴¹

Much as the Committee on Czechoslovak Questions at the Paris Peace had warned, the loss of Bohemia's mountain areas under the Munich agreement left Czechoslovakia vulnerable to German attack. This strategic loss is attributed to the Czechoslovak decision not to take up arms against Germany.

The way in which the Munich Agreement was constructed and the conditions it carried demonstrated how all of Czechoslovakia's diplomatic efforts could not change the Great-Power management of the international system. The subject of the Agreement, Czechoslovakia was not invited to the talks (nor was the Soviet Union). Signed on 29 September, the Agreement allowed German troops into the ceded territory immediately on 1 October and demanded that Czechoslovakia to complete its withdraw by 10 October.⁴²

The practical and security implications of the Agreement also underscored how the country had no say in its fate. Czechoslovakia lost all of its border areas with Germany and Austria. In total, 29 percent of Czechoslovakia's land was ceded, including 34 percent of the country's population (of which a third of those transferred were Slavic). The lost land included 58 percent of Czechoslovakia's coal industry, 65.3 percent of its glass, almost 60 percent of its textiles, and half of its paper

⁴¹ Paul E. Zinner, 'Czechoslovakia: The Diplomacy of Eduard Benes', in Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (eds), *The Diplomats, 1919-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 122.

⁴² See, especially, point 4 of the Agreement, reproduced as Appendix I in John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Munich: Prologue to Tragedy* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1948), pp. 465-7.

industries.⁴³ Moreover, although the incorporation of German populations into the Reich served to justify the Munich Agreement, it still left a quarter million Germans within the redrawn Czechoslovak frontiers, a potential subversive element to undermine further the truncated state.⁴⁴

The ceded territory also included the bulk of Czechoslovakia's military defenses, built into their own Maginot Line, as well as much of the country's heavy arms industry. From the annexation of the Sudetenland, Germany gained 1,213 aircraft, 2,253 pieces of artillery, 501 anti-aircraft guns and 1,966 anti-tank guns; 810 tanks; nearly two million pieces of small arms; more than one billion rounds of small arms ammunition and three million artillery shells. Ironically, 'Czechoslovak equipment exacted a heavy toll from the Allies' in the course of the coming war.⁴⁵

The German desires were not satisfied. Less than a half a year after the Munich Agreement, German forces occupied Bohemia and Moravia despite a pledge by Britain and France in the Munich Agreement to guarantee Czechoslovakia's new frontiers.⁴⁶ Hitler personally celebrated the annexation into the Third Reich of the Czech Lands with a visit to Prague Castle on 15 March 1939. The political obliteration of Czechoslovakia was completed the next day when an independent Slovak Republic was created, unambiguously aligned with the Fascist powers.

To an extent, the post-Munich destruction of Czechoslovakia can be attributed to Czechoslovak action. Its internal ethnic divisions ensured that 'Czechoslovakia effectively dismembered itself', and the complete dissection of the country in March 1939 has been described as 'the

⁴³ Korbél, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 152.

⁴⁴ See Wheeler-Bennett, *Munich*, p. 194.

⁴⁵ Korbél, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 158.

⁴⁶ See 'Annex to the Agreement', referring to paragraph 6 of the Anglo-French Proposals to the Czechoslovak Government (September 19, 1938). For the former, see Wheeler-Bennett, *Munich*, p. 466; and the latter at p. 457.

interplay of historical factors reach[ing] its logical conclusions'.⁴⁷ Beneš attempted to reverse the effects of Munich by diplomatic means. He despatched telegrams to the Munich signatories and to the League of Nations, condemning the Agreement as the 'great international crime'. He closed his appeal for assistance to the United States, delivered on 18 March 1939 at the University of Chicago, in characteristic fashion: 'To all right-thinking men and women everywhere, I give the motto of my beloved nation - "*Truth Prevails*".'⁴⁸

In the same year as Munich, Karel Čapek died. As the crisis of that year worsened, he wrote 'A Prayer for Tonight', the last line of which read: 'Never can a nation be called small whose faith is great enough to build a better future'.⁴⁹ When Čapek died, it was as if his values of humanity went also.⁵⁰ It would fall to Beneš to build Czechoslovakia's 'better future'.

THE FAILURE OF BENEŠ'S BRIDGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Much as Masaryk had done during the First World War, Beneš constructed and pursued what would become his postwar foreign policy during the Second World War well before hostilities were concluded.

The nature of that policy, a combination of idealistic support of humanist values combined with practical security measures, mimicked aspects of its post-World War I predecessor.

⁴⁷ Bradley, *Velvet Revolution*, p. xiv.

⁴⁸ Cited in Hubert Ripka, *Munich: Before and After* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1939). *Munich*, pp. 407 and 409.

⁴⁹ Karel Čapek, 'A Prayer for Tonight', in Robert J. Kerner (ed.), *Czechoslovakia: Twenty Years of Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1940).

⁵⁰ Paraphrased from Hájek, 'Traditions', p. 180.

In keeping with its tradition of universal humanist values, Czechoslovakia was an original signatory of the UN Charter. True, all Allies were effectively such. Nevertheless, Beneš and Masaryk were personally active in the Charter's conception and wording.

The humanism of the interwar era, however, was not to be carried over fully to Beneš's postwar government. The policy of co-habitation with the large German minority was ended. Nearly three million Sudeten Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia on the grounds of collective guilt. The morality of the measure was not questioned at the time; in fact, it probably carried an air of rectitude, having been accepted by the Allies at the Potsdam Conference of July 1945. The nature of the expulsion, however, would return as a moral problem among Czechoslovak dissidents in the 1970s and would play a significant part in defining post-Communist Czechoslovakia's relations with Germany.

The practical aspects of Beneš's post-World War II policy involved conceptualising the geographic location of the country: Czechoslovakia was to serve as a bridge between East and West. Bridges serve various purposes, but irrespective of the purposes, a bridge can only operate if it is secured at both ends. Beneš relied very much on the bridgehead in the East, with the Soviet Union, in part because the Munich experience made him distrustful of the West. But he misunderstood the foundations of that eastern bridgehead. The question is the extent to which he was forced by circumstance to trust and rely on the Soviet Union or whether he was personally responsible for that failure.

Beneš bears substantial blame for at least two reasons. The first is because he seemed himself to have assessed the Soviet threat but misperceived it; the second lies with his determination to resist aggression and subterfuge, but, this all the more damning, his distinct failure to act when the need arose.

Beneš sensed the untrustworthy nature of Soviet policy as early as 15 December 1939. Beneš was informed by the head of the Czechoslovak legation in Moscow, Zdeněk Fierlinger, that Soviet authorities demanded its activities terminate by January 1940. Beneš called the message 'quite a sad message'. Even six weeks earlier, Beneš expressed his expectation that, despite the results of Soviet inaction during the Munich crisis, Czechoslovak-Soviet relations would enjoy 'mutual sympathy and friendship'. He also hoped that the Soviet Union 'would do nothing that would do us harm in the political sphere'.⁵¹

When the legation was closed down eight months later, he was more fierce in his judgment of Soviet designs:

The Soviets will be brutal and egotistic in the making of their politics and will change them whenever they find it suitable. The goal will be twofold. The protection of their territory and their interests by means of using other states for that purpose. And that includes Czechoslovakia. Their ultimate revolutionary aims will continue; otherwise, though, our co-operation with them here and at home must continue. Do, however, keep these facts continuously in mind, don't forget them and proceed carefully.⁵²

Despite his suspicions, Beneš remained sympathetic to the Soviets.

This probably accounts for his willingness to negotiate with Stalin during the war, and, particularly, for his determination to trust the Soviet leader. In fact, he had little option, illustrating how the nature of the international system contoured his actions. The betrayal of Munich caused Czechoslovak disillusionment with Britain and France. He was also displeased with their hesitation to recognise his wartime government and the time taken before each rescinded the Munich Agreement. Beneš therefore was inclined to approach the Soviets more openly than he might

⁵¹ This paragraph draws from Walter Ullmann, 'Beneš Between East and West', in Skilling (ed.), p. 55.

⁵² Beneš to Czechoslovak underground, 2 August 1940 in Edvard Táborský, *Presidentův sekretář vypovídá*, Vol. II (Zurich, 1978), p. 302, cited in *ibid.*

have otherwise.⁵³ In 1943 he began concrete negotiations with Stalin, offering Ruthenia to the Soviet Union. One concession he received in return was Soviet consent to the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans. Although Beneš might have found his dealings with Stalin workable and advantageous, developments following the close of the war gave a different scenario.

The three years after 1945 were 'an uneasy interregnum which nourished hopes both within the communist and the non-communist camp that Czechoslovakia could serve as a bridge between East and West, and work out its own solution within a possible fusion of Masarykism and Marxism'.⁵⁴

However, Beneš's policy of giving Czechoslovakia a delicate bridging role in Europe was overtaken by realpolitik, giving credence to Jan Masaryk's more crass definition of the utility of bridges: they endure indignities from the people and horses who cross them.⁵⁵

THE 1948 COMMUNIST PUTSCH

The ability of the Czechoslovaks to exercise choice was put to decisive test in the three years after the end of World War II. By 1948 the Soviet atomisation and penetration of all countries in the region was nearly complete and clear lines of division were being drawn across Europe. In that context, it is fair to conclude that 'As 1948 approached, Czechoslovakia's position between East and West was becoming

⁵³ See Taborsky, *Beneš, passim*.

⁵⁴ Barnard, 'Political Culture', p. 137.

⁵⁵ Paraphrased from George Klein, 'Czechoslovakia: Views of the Bridge', *Problems of Communism* Vol. XXVI, No. 6 (November-December 1977), p. 60.

untenable'.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, many actions were available to the Czechoslovak leadership and people that could have resulted in different outcomes. First, Czechoslovakia's international position was different from that of any of its neighbours. More importantly, the series of events within Czechoslovakia leading up to February 1948 suggest that the Communist takeover could have been prevented.

Czechoslovakia had been an allied country. Therefore, it conceivably could have received different treatment than belligerent countries like Hungary and Romania. Unlike Poland, Czechoslovakia faced no clear and specific designs on its territory (other than Ruthenia, which Beneš had offered to Stalin) or on its sovereignty. The Soviet Army was voluntarily withdrawn from the country after the war, although the secret security forces remained.

Internal developments might also have had a decisive impact. The terms given to the events of February 1948 define the different interpretations given to them. For democrats, what happened was a 'coup' or 'subversion'.⁵⁷ Communists used indecent and unjust tactics against democratic, if naive, coalition partners who would not have expected such an outcome. This was particularly because domestic politics in Czechoslovakia were resumed in a positive, inclusive and conciliatory fashion.

Before analysing the responsibility for the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia, it is first necessary to offer a factual account.

In October 1945 a provisional National Assembly of 300 deputies was established. A coalition Cabinet was created with the Communists in charge of eight ministries, including the Interior and Information. The

⁵⁶ Condoleezza Rice, 'The Czechoslovakian Secret Police', in Jonathan R. Adelman (ed.), *Terror and Communist Politics*: (Boulder: Westview, 1984), p. 160.

⁵⁷ For example, Josef Korbel, *The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).

latter post allowed the Communists to engage in censorship by exercising control over the distribution of newsprint.⁵⁸ In May 1946, full elections were held which have generally been deemed free and fair. (As much as Communists might have been said to have enjoyed extensive popular support, the November 1947 University student elections, 'always a reliable indicator of the political mood of the country, resulted in a telling 74 percent victory for democratic candidates, while the Communists garnered only 20 percent'.⁵⁹) The Communist Party (CCP) won not a majority but a clear plurality of votes. As a result, it gained a ninth Cabinet post. The Communists proceeded to extend Communist influence over key aspects of society, especially by appointing their supporters to positions under their ministerial control, especially the police. When the non-Communist Minister of Justice, Prokop Drtina, exposed this practice the polarisation of internal Czechoslovak politics came to a head. This provoked the most severe disagreement among the coalition members. Ultimately, the non-communist ministers resigned to protest tactics of Communists, expecting that they were simply making a gesture. Beneš however, accepted their resignations.

International developments during the period helped to polarize internal politics. In March 1947 President Truman pledged US support to those fighting internal or external threats to their sovereignty in the doctrine that took his name and the Soviet Union blocked Czechoslovakia's aspirations to join the Marshall Plan.

Even though a Communist takeover seemed imminent, and Beneš at best was unwittingly permitting it, Beneš attempted to stand up to Czechoslovak Communist leader, Klement Gottwald. He challenged Gottwald on 23 February by declaring 'I will act as I did in September 1938. I

⁵⁸ Wallace, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 257.

⁵⁹ Korb, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 244.

shall not give up, be sure of that'. In the end, as in 1938, Beneš acquiesced to what seemed a *fait accompli*. On 25 February, Beneš accepted a list of appointees to a new Cabinet. It was thoroughly dominated by Communists and Communist-appointees. The period of pluralist government, one which included genuine non-Communists, had ended.

Czechoslovakia's fall into the Communist orbit has often been described as inescapable. Considering the Soviet Union's commanding presence in Central Europe, the heightening tensions of the Cold War by 1947, and Stalin's personal determination to dominate the region, it is difficult to suggest that Czechoslovakia's fate could have been made any different.

Blame has often been attributed to two general modes of action which could have otherwise halted the takeover. One was the way in which democracy functioned: it was perhaps naïve of democratic activists and supporters to expect in February 1948 that liberal-democratic niceties and constitutionalism would save the day. The historiographic question asked is whether the non-Communist ministers 'really believe[d] that militant communists would be swayed by the niceties of democratic and constitutional usage? They somehow must have, because we have no evidence that they even contemplated alternative plans. There were [generally] no democratic mass rallies and demonstrations to counteract well-organized communist shows of force, there were no paramilitary formations on the side of the democrats to meet the well-armed, communist-controlled factory militias, no thought whatsoever that force might have to be met with force. Did the democratic ministers really think that in handing their resignations to the ailing president they had done all that was expected of them?'⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Ullmann, 'Beneš', pp. 59-60.

The second aspect of blame was Beneš's own mode of behaviour during the crisis. In particular, he has been accused of making critical errors which, if not directly aiding the Communist subversion, then at least created conditions that permitted it. First, he returned to liberated Czechoslovakia 'bitter about the Munich agreement and without Masaryk's magnanimity'. While he proclaimed the construction of a new democracy, the consequence of his vindictiveness was that he 'disadvantaged his former conservative Allies, 'because they had betrayed him at the time of Munich,' and shortsightedly favored the communists with disproportionate political concessions'.⁶¹

Even though Beneš had suffered two strokes, observers discounted his health as significant grounds to diminish his personal responsibility for events.⁶² Joseph Korbél spoke to him on 12 January, as the crisis moved to its final stage, and found him 'a sick man' but 'mentally alert'.⁶³

Whatever may have been done differently on the domestic scene, historical accounts of the events convey two truths: first, that, out of passivity or deference the Czechoslovaks permitted the takeover; and second, that, irrespective of internal resistance, Czechoslovakia's international position dictated its fate. As one Czech historian writes: 'The Soviet presence in Central Europe predetermined the final outcome - the taking of power by the Communist monopoly'.⁶⁴

However the events of February 1948 may be labelled and explained, it was quickly seen that Communist rule in Czechoslovakia disconcerted most people in the country, including many of those who had supported

⁶¹ Bradley, *Velvet Revolution*, p. xv.

⁶² See, for example, Ullmann, 'Beneš', p. 59.

⁶³ Korbél, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 246.

⁶⁴ Karel Kaplan, *The Short March* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1981), p. vii.

the revolution. Among those was Milan Kundera. The novelist had proclaimed unabashedly that he and his intellectual friends supported the advent of communism, that it was the better people in Czech society who wanted communism.⁶⁵

But their expectations of communism would be disappointed. A harbinger of the nature of communist rule was shown in the regime's subsequent depiction of Klement Gottwald marking the advent of socialism. On the wintry day of 28 February 1948, Gottwald proclaimed socialism in Czechoslovakia from a balcony over Wenceslas Square. His Communist colleague Vladimír Clementis put his own hat on Gottwald's bare head. Later, Clementis would be denounced as an enemy of the people and airbrushed from the photo of the proclamation every Czechoslovak would come to know. All that remained of Clementis in official history was his hat.⁶⁶

Similarly, on the cultural front, those who 'broke into paeans' and wrote tributes to the Soviet forces, like the poet Vladimír Holan, were denounced and had their work suppressed for years.⁶⁷ Political show trials were to follow.⁶⁸

However difficult the Czechoslovaks found the consequences of the Communist takeover, they received it by their own hand. Even anti-communist historians are willing to acknowledge that, 'The peculiarity of

⁶⁵ Genuine support for Communism in Slovakia differed from that of the Czech lands. For example, in the 1946 election, 62 percent of Slovaks voted for the conservative Democratic Party, and only 30 percent for the Communist Party, a result which demonstrated the 'continuing strength of conservative nationalism and the relative weakness of communism among Slovaks'. Skilling, *Interrupted Revolution*, p. 24.

⁶⁶ Paraphrased from Milan Kundera, *Kniha smíchu a zapomnění* (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, Corp., 1981), p. 9.

⁶⁷ Hájek, 'Traditions', p. 181.

⁶⁸ For an overview, see Jiří Pelikán, *The Czechoslovak Political Trials, 1950-1954* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971). A personal account by one of the few survivors is given by Deputy Foreign Minister Artur London in *On Trial* (London: Macmillan, 1970).

the Czechoslovak experience was that in February 1948 the Communists achieved their intentions with the consent and support of a large part of the population'.⁶⁹

The experience would become, as Sviták likened it, like that of *The Grapes of Wrath*: the large character gives what he thinks is a loving embrace which kills his petite girlfriend.⁷⁰

COMMUNIST RULE, 1948-1960

After 1948, Czechoslovakia became a model Stalinist state. Nationalisation continued and the collectivisation of agriculture proceeded.

The regime also initiated political transformation. The totalising nature of the regime was felt as the whole of society, as elsewhere in socialist regimes, was brought into the Party-State system. This was done by the forcible inclusion of virtually all of the population in official organs, while unofficial organisations like the important and popular pre-communist youth movement Sokol were disbanded.

Not content with the complicity of the population, it underscored its power through coercion and brutal example. As in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and in neighbouring East European regimes after 1948, model show trials were held. Leading victims included General Secretary Rudolf Slánský and Clementis, who was Foreign Minister from 1948 to 1950. Imprisonment or execution was not reserved for the best sons of the Communist movement, but extended into the broader population. The Minister for Security, Karol Bacílek, was responsible for the purges. He

⁶⁹ Kaplan, *Short March*, p. vii.

⁷⁰ Sviták, *Unbearable*.

explained during the Prague Spring that he was fulfilling Soviet instructions.⁷¹

After 1953, in nominal response to Soviet liberalisation after Stalin's death, the Czechoslovak regime embarked on the 'New Course', relaxing the industrialisation and collectivisation drive of the preceding five years. Efforts were made to improve the standard of living, with some economic reorientation towards agricultural, light industrial and consumer goods.⁷²

Between 1948 and 1960, the Communists were able if not to erase then at least to suppress dominant Czechoslovak national trends but they were resurgent by the beginning of the 1960s.⁷³ That resurgence was combined with recognition, even and especially by the so-called 'victors of February', of the negative effects of the Communist course.⁷⁴

In the early 1960s, therefore, the regime attempted new political tactics. The report of the Central Committee (CC) of the CCP in November 1961 'adopted a clever line of symbolic de-Stalinisation'. On the visible side this extended to the removal of the world's largest statue of Stalin, erected remarkably in 1955 as Khrushchev prepared his programme of de-Stalinisation. (The monument was later sold to West Germany as scrap metal). Gottwald's body, on public display since his death in 1953 was finally interred. Substantive political change, however, did not occur, and President Antonín Novotný, himself associated with Czechoslovak Stalinism, proclaimed that there was no need to revise the verdicts on the purge trials.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Korbél, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 255.

⁷² Skilling, *Interrupted Revolution*, p. 30.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Kaplan, *Short March*, p. vii.

⁷⁵ See Skilling, *Interrupted Revolution*, pp. 39-40.

The few political concessions that were made backfired. This was, first, because they recentralised as much as they allowed for initiative; and second, because the political changes failed to address an objectively worsening and ever-increasingly visible economic decline. More than even the resurgence of interwar Czechoslovak political culture, the looming economic crisis compelled the regime towards a liberalisation programme.

1960-1968: FORCED INTO REFORM

By 1960 the country began to notice the effects of economic decline. Largely unscathed by the Second World War, the recovery of industrial and agricultural output in Czechoslovakia was smoother than in neighbouring states. This allowed the economy to float along, although the reality was that the productivity of capital declined continuously.

In 1961-63 economic growth stopped altogether, 'an event without parallel in the communist world'. The fall of national income in 1962 and 1963 was accompanied by a scarcity of consumer goods.

The regime responded by attributing the economic decline to the (limited) decentralisation permitted in 1958 which it tried to reverse at the 1962 Party Congress. Nevertheless, the fall in productivity continued and became unmistakably evident to all as the use of street lights was curtailed to conserve electricity.

Under the third Five-Year Plan which was to run 1961-65, the stipulated increases in national income was 42%, industrial output 56%, and agricultural output 22%. The results, however, were substantially lower, with national income increasing only by 10%, industrial output by 29% and agriculture actually contracting by 0.4%.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Vladimir V. Kusin, *Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1971), p. 88.

The economic situation both called for and permitted wider, more free economic discussion and important economic studies emerged from this debate. More than providing solutions to the economic malaise, these studies represented attacks on specific policies in Czechoslovakia and on tenets of Soviet-bloc socialism.

Among these works were the Commission Report headed by Radovan Richta entitled *Civilization at the Crossroads: Social and Human Implications of the Scientific Totalitarian Revolution*, which was first published in 1966.⁷⁷

The study claimed that it was in keeping with Communist Party, explaining its methodology as 'the first steps in a Marxist approach to the scientific and technical revolution, contained in the Programme of the CPSU'.⁷⁸ The authors also pronounced that American studies failed to confront the 'sociological and anthropological dimensions' of the Scientific Technological Revolution (STR);⁷⁹ no doubt this was a genuinely-felt observation, but it was also one that could serve to appease ideological scrutineers in the Czechoslovak or Soviet Communist Parties.

The economic impulses behind reform were crucial. At the same time a general intellectual and cultural revolution was occurring in the early 1960s. Scholars 'as contributors to cultural weeklies and in scholarly journals and conferences, in the daily round of lectures and discussions, in books, were carrying through what amounted to an intellectual revolution'.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Radovan Richta and a research team, *Civilization at the Crossroads: Social and Human Implications of the Scientific and Technical Revolution* (Prague: International Arts and Sciences Press Inc., 1968).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸⁰ Skilling, *Interrupted Revolution*, p. 91.

The whole reform movement could be seen, especially in its cultural aspects, as a departure from Soviet norms. 'The basic quality underlying the transition from Stalinism to democratic socialism was seen in a "return to Europe" in the general cultural sense. Practically, this was taken to mean that socialism should be coupled with the best of world culture in the field of economy and technology, in the democratism of the political system and in spiritual culture. The goals, thus conceived, had no precedent'. While such reforms promised a hybrid of socialist and Western practice, at least culturally the Czechoslovak reformers were also dispensing with the '"Russian"', "Asian" likeness of Communism', and instead were reverting back to 'their own traditions, they had to revert to Europe'.⁸¹

1968 AND INTERVENTION

On, or about, 20 January 1968, an array of various Party specialists assembled. The group's chairman Drahomír Kolder explained that their purpose was to enumerate 'the things which hurt us most and make people discontent'.⁸² Ironically missing from the distinguished group was any representative of the working class. While the Action Programme has been labelled a 'managerial and technocratic manifesto' drawing on the works of Richta, economist Ota Šik, and Zdeněk Mlynář,⁸³ it also reflected the diverse philosophical undercurrents of the period. It similarly attempted, in a programmatic form, to present a mediation between these conflicting views, in particular through the works of

⁸¹ Kusin, *Intellectual Origins*, pp. 100-1.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64, citing Pavel Tigrid, 'Czechoslovakia, 1969: A Post-mortem', *Survey* (Autumn 1969), p. 152.

⁸³ Benjamin B. Page, *The Czechoslovak Reform Movement, 1963-1968* (Amsterdam: B.R. Gruner B.V., 1973).

philosopher Karel Kosík and Richta,⁸⁴ and thereby provide an alternative formula to remove the corruptions in socialism caused by Stalinism. The Action Programme sought to overcome alienation through the provision of institutions by which man can again possess some control of the determination of his life. Many of the reforms which came to bear Dubček's name were undertaken by others, although of course he represented and exemplified 'the spirit' of the programme.⁸⁵

In its first section, the Action Programme concluded, as did the Richta Commission and economist Radoslav Selucký, that implementation of socialism in Czechoslovakia had harmful consequences. Likewise, it attributed those problems to centralised control and decision-making, which resulted because '[s]ocialist democracy was not expanded in time, [so that the] methods of revolutionary dictatorship deteriorated into bureaucracy and became an impediment to progress in all spheres of life in Czechoslovakia'.⁸⁶

The Party, in addition, according to the Action Programme, removed subjectivity from society. It is here that the Action Programme made its noted attack on Lenin's notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat: 'In the past, the leading role of the Party was often conceived as a monopolistic concentration of power in the hands of Party bodies. This corresponds to the false thesis that the Party was the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat'. The Action Programme declared '[t]his harmful conception weakened the initiative and responsibility of the State,

⁸⁴ Karel Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on Problems of Man and World* (Dordrecht, Holland: D.Reidel Publishing Company, 1976). Following the book's appearance in 1963, 'it was no longer possible for Czech philosophy as a whole to revert to apologetics of policies and political systems'. Kusin, *Intellectual Origins*, p. 51.

⁸⁵ Hugh Lunghi, 'Introduction', in Paul Ello, (ed.), *Dubcek's Blueprint for Freedom: His Original Documents Leading to the Invasion of Czechoslovakia* (London: William Kimber, 1969), p. 18.

⁸⁶ Action Programme, p. 10, in *Blueprint*, p. 132.

economic and social institutions and damaged the Party's authority, and prevented it from carrying out its real function'. The role of the Party, the tract elaborates, "is not to become a universal 'caretaker of the society, to bind all organizations and every step taken in life by its directives'. Instead, the mission of the Party lay 'primarily in arousing socialist initiative, in showing the ways and actual possibilities of communist perspectives, and in winning over all workers for them through systematic persuasion, as well as by the personal examples of communists'.⁸⁷

For the sake of economic development, the Action Programme called for the contraction of the commanding role of the Party. Only through allowing the free activity of interests can the political environment for the New Economic Mechanism be laid, so that, following from reasoning of the Richta group, the scientific and technological revolution could begin in Czechoslovakia.

The recognition of interests in society was not only a precondition for economic development, but also served to reintegrate the atomised elements of society into a totality. The Action Programme referred to specific 'interest groups'⁸⁸ both in an appeal for political support, but also in its practical assessment of the philosophical means by which to achieve political participation in democracy. It is necessary to examine the interests which the Action Programme acknowledges in order to assess how it sought to reformulate a social totality.

The nationalities question received substantial attention in the Programme, particularly the political and constitutional status of the Slovaks. This concern was not limited to the Programme. For example, in his famous 1 April 1968 speech, which reflected his humanist concerns,

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22, in *ibid.*, p. 144.

⁸⁸ This is not a term found in the Action Programme, but will be used to indicate the atomized entities that the tract identified.

Dubček called for a federative system to resolve the nationality question in accordance with Leninism, and stated that this would be provided for under the Action Programme, although he acknowledged that the arrangement would still require improvement.⁸⁹

The Action Programme conceded that the powers of Slovak national organizations had been undercut throughout the 1950s and then in the 1960 Czechoslovak Constitution,⁹⁰ a document which Skilling cites as having 'openly articulated extreme centralism and reduced even the forms of Slovak self-government to nil'.⁹¹ The Action Programme submitted numerous corrective measures, including: Awarding of jurisdiction over economic planning for Slovakia to an strengthened Slovak National Council, assurance of equal eligibility of the two nationalities for national appointments, and guarantees that the Slovak minority could not be outvoted on matters concerning the constitutional viability of Slovakia,⁹² and guarantees of equal education opportunities for minorities and minority say on nationality education.⁹³

The reform efforts were codified in the Action Programme which was approved by the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CCP) Plenum on 5 April and published five days later. Despite all of the doctrinal and policy changes implied by its contents, care was also taken so that it would not be construed as revising or deviating from socialist principles, it was written 'in the traditional jargon of apparatus documents'.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ 'The Speech by Comrade Alexander Dubcek', p. 35, in Ello, (ed.), *Blueprint*, p. 97.

⁹⁰ Action Programme, p. 37, in *Blueprint*, p. 37.

⁹¹ Skilling, *Interrupted Revolution*, p. 10.

⁹² Action Programme, pp. 36-40, in *Blueprint*, pp. 158-62.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 78, in *Blueprint*, p. 200.

⁹⁴ Skilling, *Interrupted Revolution*, p. 218.

Nevertheless, many of the practical domestic proposals of the Prague Spring challenged communist orthodoxy. The promise of freedom of assembly and association meant that voluntary popular organisations could emerge and thereby necessarily challenge the supremacy and centrality of the Party-State system. Provisions were made to limit the excesses of this freedom, so that while minority views were to be tolerated, they were only to be so in the context of majority rule. Personal and property rights were to be ensured, with the added provision for compensation resulting from 'illegal decisions of state organs'.⁹⁵

The reform movement was cautious with regards to the reformulation of Czechoslovak foreign policy. Official declarations generally avoided foreign policy matters entirely for the first three months. As in other areas of government, the reform regime installed new people in positions of foreign-policy decision-making. These included Prime Minister Černík who was also responsible for defence and foreign policy; Valeš who was made Minister of Foreign Trade; General M. Dzúr as the new Defence Minister and Jiří Pelikan as Chairman of the Federal Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee.⁹⁶ Josef Smrkovský specified that the country's foreign policy orientation would not change. As if to avoid the fatal mistake of Imre Nagy's regime in 1956 declaring that it would withdraw Hungary from the Warsaw Treaty, Smrkovský affirmed that Czechoslovakia was 'part of the socialist camp' and that its relations with the Soviet Union were 'untouchable', even if he did also say those relations had to be based on equality (which, strictly as rhetoric, presumably was acceptable to Soviet doctrine).⁹⁷

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 622.

⁹⁷ Skilling, *Interrupted Revolution*, p. 629.

At the same time however, Dubček's Foreign Minister Jiří Hájek made statements on at least two issues which must have disconcerted the Soviet Union, and expressed views on others which diverged from bloc policy. The first was his positive assessment of Czechoslovakia's interwar participation in the Triple Entente, which he called a 'great and useful idea' which was 'at the least, an expression of an independent, active foreign policy'.⁹⁸ He wrote this in later July, as most of Czechoslovakia's WTO partners intensified their verbal attacks on the reform programme.

Hájek also seemed to make conditional Czechoslovakia's permanent alliance with the Soviet Union. He questioned the universal applicability of the tenet 'with the Soviet Union for eternity' by stating it needed to be considered in the context of Czechoslovakia's 'specific conditions'. In addition to the two doctrinal departures, he commented on Soviet bloc foreign policy. He disparaged Czechoslovakia's severance of relations with Israel after the Six Day War, which all bloc countries save Romania did, and proposed modification of his country's relations towards West Germany.⁹⁹

The Soviet Union was alarmed for several reasons. Among them were the pressures exerted by personalities and interests within the Soviet Union and the bloc. The former included the concern of the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party that there would be a nationalist spillover; the latter the threat felt by the East German regime by what it deemed Czechoslovak revisionism.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Cited in Korb, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 295.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ For fears of revisionism in different parts of the Soviet bloc, see especially Jiří Valenta, *The Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979/1991); and Grey Hodnett and Peter J. Potichnyj, *The Ukraine and the Czechoslovak Crisis* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1970).

A standard assessment of the motivation behind the intervention was the strategic fear Czechoslovakia's allies had in case the reforms were taken further. If Czechoslovakia deviated enough to weaken or even remove the bonds of international socialism, such as the supremacy of the Communist Party, commonality of the socialist language, and allegiance to Moscow,¹⁰¹ then it would threaten the strategic integrity of the bloc. The military supply and communications lines linking the northern and southern tiers of the WTO ran through Czechoslovakia.¹⁰²

Although the reform movement was cautious about its foreign policy orientation, Dubček implicitly recognised Czechoslovakia's central geographic position in a February 1968 public speech, when he called for the introduction of normal relations with all European states irrespective of divergences in political-social systems.¹⁰³ The fatality of location was later reiterated by Dubček when he answered a question as to why Czechs and Slovaks did not resist the intervention of 1968 with: 'Look at the map'.¹⁰⁴

To accept Dubček as a simple victim of geography, however, is inaccurate. As with Beneš in 1948, options were open to him. The Soviet Union gave clear signals as to its objection to the reformist course.

In March 1968 the heads of WTO Communist Parties (including the CCP), save Romania's Ceauşescu, met in Dresden. The meeting issued a communiqué which called for 'vigilance against the 'aggressive intentions and subversive actions of the imperialist forces,' emphasized the necessity

¹⁰¹ For an overview of the 'ties that bind' in relations among socialists see, Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations*, and Karen Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform* (2nd ed).

¹⁰² See, for example, Karen Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

¹⁰³ See Karen Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 18.

¹⁰⁴ *The Times*, 21 August 1990.

for 'further consolidation of the socialist countries,' and expressed confidence that 'the working class and all the working people of the Czechoslovak Republic, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, will ensure the further development of socialist construction in the country'.¹⁰⁵

Representatives of the WTO Communist Parties that had met in Dresden assembled again on 15 July in Warsaw. This time representatives from Czechoslovakia were not included. The meeting produced the 'Warsaw letter', addressed to the Czechoslovak Central Committee which apprised the Czechoslovak leadership that the socialist community could not 'assent to hostile forces pushing your country off the path of socialism and creating the threat that Czechoslovakia may break away from the socialist commonwealth'.¹⁰⁶ The letter instructed the Czechoslovak leadership that its political course was 'no longer your own internal affair' and stipulated that every Communist Party had 'responsibility not only to its own working class...but also to the international working class'. Unambiguously, it added, 'In this struggle, you may count on the solidarity and comprehensive assistance of the fraternal socialist countries'.¹⁰⁷

In addition to issuing public warnings to the Czechoslovak regime, the Soviet Union also undertook direct talks. They began on 29 July in Čierná nad Tisou, the border crossing on the Czechoslovak side of the common frontier. The pressure on the Czechoslovak leadership to consent to Soviet demands should have been obvious. Preceding the meeting, Soviet press accounts of the Czechoslovak reforms were characterised by increased hostility. In addition, the Soviet Army, having entered the

¹⁰⁵ Korbél, *Czechoslovakia*, pp 301-2, citing Remington, *Winter in Prague*, pp. 55-7.

¹⁰⁶ Cited in Skilling, *Interrupted Revolution*, p. 290.

¹⁰⁷ Cited in Korbél, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 303-4.

country for exercises, remained in Czechoslovakia as the talks commenced, while the largest postwar movement of Soviet forces was underway in Czechoslovakia's three East European neighbours.¹⁰⁸ Dubček, however, left the talks firmly supporting the reform programme and believing that Czechoslovak sovereignty was secure.¹⁰⁹

Dubček's confidence may have been buoyed by the popular support for his stand. The Warsaw letter generated unprecedented support among Czechoslovaks for Dubček's government, which was seen as 'a significant factor underlying the firmness of the leadership's resistance to Soviet pressure and may have warded off military intervention by demonstrating the absence of local support for such action'.¹¹⁰

Although Dubček may have understood the warning given to him by the Soviet Union, he chose not to retreat from the Action Programme. He would also have faced domestic criticism for backing down, as was demonstrated by playwright Václav Havel. He wrote to Dubček in August 1969 warning him against recanting and noting the morality of such an act which, even if it not immediately, could have political results in the longer-term.¹¹¹

Throughout the evening of 20-21 August, however, forces of five Warsaw Pact countries entered Czechoslovakia. Soviet military forces, some already present in the country from the earlier 'exercises', numbered the most and secured strategic and communications points. Hungarian forces came into southern Slovakia; East German forces crossed the northwestern

¹⁰⁸ Skilling, *Interrupted Revolution*, p. 297.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

¹¹¹ Václav Havel, *Dálkový výslech* (Praha: Melantrich, 1989), pp. 102-3.

frontiers; and Bulgarian units were flown into Prague's airport.¹¹²

Soviet ambassadors informed the Western governments to which they were accredited that the events constituted a 'domestic' affair and was assumed in order to ensure peace.

In face of both the Warsaw Pact's military intervention and the Soviet Union's political manipulations, the Czechoslovaks did try to take action of their own. The foremost political activity was the holding of the extraordinary Congress of the CCP, which had originally been scheduled for September. It was moved ahead to 22 August and held in secret in a factory in the Prague quarter of Vysočany, from which the Congress subsequently took its name.¹¹³ Small, individual initiatives included the removal of street signs in order to obfuscate the Soviet occupation. Otherwise, resistance was limited. This was in part due to what might be considered the balanced view of the Czechs of national survival: as in the Second World War, it is better to avoid large-scale, potentially futile resistance which could result in the obliteration of the nation. In that way honour might not be preserved, but the nation would be.

On a practical level, the Czechoslovak military and security services were deeply penetrated by Soviet personnel. During the negotiations leading up to, and then during the events of the crisis itself, Dubček found that his Soviet interlocutors knew more of the activities of his security services than he did. So fulfilling of Moscow's demands were the Czechoslovak secret services that it was they who forced Dubček and his

¹¹² Debate has arisen as to the nature and number of non-Soviet WTO forces used in the intervention. See, for example, Douglas L. Clarke, 'Rewriting History from the Grave: East Germany and the 1968 Invasion of Czechoslovakia', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 20 (18 May 1990), pp. 43-45.

¹¹³ An account is given in Jiří Pelikan, *The Secret Vysočany Congress* (New York: St Martins Press).

senior colleagues to Moscow to consent to the post-intervention agreement.¹¹⁴

The Soviet leadership astutely, if with some difficulty, forced Dubček to sanction its actions and to install the Soviet puppet regime in Prague. Prague Spring leaders Dubček, Oldřich Černík, Josef Smrkovský and Svoboda were taken to the Soviet capital. There, on 26 August, the Moscow Protocol - or, as Czechoslovaks called it, the 'Moscow *diktat*' - was constructed. The Protocol proclaimed fraternal socialist relations and the need for the defence of socialism; absent from it, however, was any reference to national sovereignty or integrity. Under the Protocol, the Dubček government itself consented to reverse all of the major planks and achievements of its reforms, particularly in the area of political, cultural and social pluralism. The Vysočany Extraordinary Congress was therefore annulled, 'anti-socialist' political parties terminated, centralised Party control of media reinstituted, and leading reformers removed. The latter measure marked the start of 'normalisation', the expulsion of Party members from their membership and occupations.¹¹⁵ This process of political purification would claim Dubček as well.

Ultimately the Soviets saw Dubček as less than an independent actor. To finalise the manipulation of Dubček as a Soviet tool, he was made ambassador to Turkey in January 1970. This was perhaps similar to the 'exile' of Molotov as Soviet ambassador to Mongolia. But Dubček was soon recalled from the post, stripped of his Party membership, and, like Malenkov who was made manager of a remote cement factory, he was relegated to menial work with the Slovak Forestry Commission. Dubček's

¹¹⁴ Rice 'Secret Police', p. 169; and Adelman, 'Conclusions', p. 277. For the relationship between the Soviet and Czechoslovak military, and to an extent secret services, see Condollezza Rice, *The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

¹¹⁵ See Milan Šimečka, *The Resortation of Order: The Normalization of Czechoslovakia* (London: Verso, 1984).

compliance with Soviet demands demonstrated clearly how self-will had been replaced by dictation from without. However, Dubček re-entered public life at a crucial time, in the denouement of the November 1989 Revolution.

'NORMALISATION' AND THE SPECTRE OF DISSENT

The end-result of the reform movement was that some 75,000 Soviet forces were stationed in Czechoslovakia on a 'temporary' basis. Czechoslovaks took to defining temporary as eternity minus one day.

The achievements of the reform movement were all reversed. The only real lasting result of the Prague Spring was the federal nature of the country. It was a concession which would encourage Slovak demands for autonomy while being insufficient to satisfy them. The Prague Spring provided a legal framework which contributed to the disintegration of the Federation after Communism.

By 1970, Prague Spring leaders had been removed from public life. The purging of the Party then extended into its mass membership. As many as 500 000 members, half the Party, resigned, were expelled or 'deleted' from the nomenklatura.¹¹⁶ Virtually anyone loosely associated with the reform movement - journalists, artists, teachers, economists, bureaucrats - were removed from their jobs and forced into generally unskilled labour. Much of the adult population was forced into signing denunciations of the Prague Spring or face retributions. Nearly 200,000 Czechoslovaks also fled the country, or if already abroad, declined to return. They lost their citizenship and were barred by the new regime from ever returning.

¹¹⁶ Bernard Wheaton and Zdeněk Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution: Czechoslovakia, 1988-1991* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p. 7.

The new regime sought not to function strictly by coercion. As the Hungarian regime had done after the crushing of Nagy's reforms,¹¹⁷ so too the Czechoslovak regime sought to make a notional social contract with the population whereby people could benefit from modest improvements in their standard of living in exchange for abstinence from politics. The trend among the bulk of the population became 'inner emigration': the removal of the self from public life.

For all its efforts to subdue the population - through modest economic incentives underscored by threat - challenges continued to confront the regime. However, substantive dissent was limited to a few.

What 'dissent' there was in post-1968 Czechoslovakia met regular and harsh treatment from the regime. State persecution helped to coalesce the limited opposition that existed. The trial of the underground rock group 'Plastic People of the Universe', so named to mock political leadership, united and made the opposition more public. The core of Czechoslovakia's independent thinkers coalesced during the 1970s. On 1 January 1977, Charter 77, a loose grouping of independently-minded citizens, was launched. Its leading members were arrested even as they posted an open declaration of their cause to the Czechoslovak President and other officials.¹¹⁸

Charter 77 certainly provided an important intellectual core to dissent but its membership never exceeded 2,000. More importantly, however, it probably served as a national conscience and certainly, when the protests began on 17 November 1989, it provided a nucleus and structure for maximising opportunity and carrying through the Revolution.

¹¹⁷ Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller, *Hungary 1956 Revisited* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), p. 146.

¹¹⁸ For an account, see H. Gordon Skilling, *Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), pp. 1ff.

A change of regime could not, however, come about simply by individual initiative. It required change in Soviet policy and profound developments throughout the region before the Czechoslovak regime itself, and its subjects, undertook initiatives of their own.

THE VELVET REVOLUTION

From the 'normalisation' of 1969 to the Revolution of 1989, Czechoslovakia was a country under ice. Much of its cultural elite, such as leading novelists like Josef Škvorecký and Milan Kundera, were in exile; those who remained at home, like Havel, faced regular persecution, phone tapping, police surveillance and prison sentences under Articles 202 and 203 which gave the regime license to arrest on the vague pretext of disturbances to the peace.

Politically, the regime obediently followed Moscow's cue and undertook no significant policies of its own. Any change that was to occur had to come from without.

The first impulse in this direction was the promotion of Mikhail Gorbachev to General-Secretary of the CPSU. His initial references to strengthening ties within the socialist bloc and of drawing on the underused potential of socialism doubtless gave comfort to a Czechoslovak leadership which owed its legitimacy to the Soviet intervention.

Gorbachev's proposed domestic reforms for the Soviet Union, such as *perestroika* and *glasnost*, appeared to be similar to the Prague Spring. This was confirmed by Gorbachev's press secretary, Gennadi Gerasimov: the distinction between contemporary Soviet reforms and those of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was simply twenty years.

The pressure from the Soviet Union on Czechoslovakia to change intensified. Gustáv Husák, who had replaced Dubček as First Secretary in April 1969, travelled to Moscow for the 70th anniversary of the October

Revolution; remarkably, he and his entourage left the Soviet capital before the ceremonies themselves. He returned to Prague still as head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. On 17 December 1987, however, he resigned that post, but retained the position of President. His successor was Miloš Jakeš.

Perhaps encouraged by the fact of the change, rather than the specific choice of leader, public protests started in the country. In 1988 and into early 1989, in small and modest crowds, numbering a few thousand, Czechoslovaks for the first time since 1968 marked politically significant historical dates, such as the anniversaries of the intervention, the founding of the First Republic and the self-immolation of student Jan Palach in protest of the Soviet occupation.

The regime responded with riot police and arrests. Leading dissidents like Havel were jailed in January 1989, and some, like Slovak Ján Čarnogurský, were only released during the revolution later in the year.

Developments throughout the rest of the bloc inspired and encouraged the Czechoslovaks. In June 1989 the first contested seats to Poland's Sejm returned non-Communist Solidarity candidates. By virtue of their parliamentary status, Polish dissidents, who had developed close personal ties with like-minded Czechoslovaks during the 1980s, now had diplomatic passports with which to travel to Czechoslovakia. This in turn encouraged Czechoslovak dissidents.¹¹⁹

The decision by the Hungarian regime to open its border with neutral Austria resulted not only in the pinprick which popped the socialist bubble in Eastern Europe, but it also gave specific example of individual initiative to the Czechoslovaks. The East Germans who

¹¹⁹ Accounted to me by Polish-Czechoslovak solidarity activist Markéta Fialkova-Němcová, interviews September 1994 and 1995.

eventually stormed the West German embassy in Prague in their thousands contributed to the downfall of the East German regime.

But it was only in the context of thorough change in the rest of Eastern Europe that Czechoslovaks truly took their fate into their own hands. Sharon Wolchik argues that the 'collapse of the communist system in Czechoslovakia in November 1989 was precipitated by events outside the country'.¹²⁰

Only after the 'fall of the Berlin Wall', simply one of the many East German border crossings opened on 9 November, did Czechoslovak action intensify. At that point, all of Czechoslovakia's East European neighbours - Hungary, Poland and East Germany - had substantially removed Communist rule.

Czechoslovak initiatives started almost by accident or by the miscalculation of the Czechoslovak regime. On 17 November a small student march was held to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Nazi crackdown on Czech Universities and student associations. The protestors were beaten by riot police, which generated popular support for the protesters from the otherwise still hesitant Czechoslovak population. Rumours of a fatality, possibly disseminated by the Czechoslovak Secret Service to suggest that the students were uncontrollable, brought more people onto the streets.

Ultimately, hundreds of thousands protested peacefully in town squares across the country, most notably in Prague's Wenceslas Square which was occupied continually for ten days.

In the face of these crowds, and having been told by Moscow not to expect Soviet assistance in a crackdown, the Czechoslovak regime made belated and limited concessions to assuage the protestors. Following a protest of hundreds of thousands in the large Letná grounds in northern

¹²⁰ Sharon L. Wolchik, *Czechoslovakia in Transition* (London: Pinter, 1991), p. 40.

Prague on International Labour Day on 26 November, the most disliked of Communist leaders were dismissed. They included Miroslav Štěpán who was responsible for the internal deportation of student protestors in January.

The Communist Party then chisled away its own legal legitimacy. It annulled Article 4 of the Constitution which gave the CCP its leading role in political life and Articles 6 and 16 which ended its preeminence over the coalition of puppet left-wing parties that constituted the ruling coalition, the National Front.

In any other circumstances such changes would have been deemed revolutionary and would probably have fulfilled latent Czechoslovak demands for change. These measures, however, were not enough, not least for the revolution's self-appointed leaders. In Prague, Civic Forum was created, and an analogous group in Bratislava called Public Against Violence. Composed especially of leading dissidents, these groups set out demands on the regime which included its dismissal. Through persistent bargaining, backed by popular protests, Civic Forum achieved an interim coalition government on 10 December. Key ministerial posts, among them Economy, Finance, the Interior and Foreign Affairs, were to be given to non-Communists.

While the Federal Parliament was still filled by Communists, with free parliamentary elections scheduled for June 1990, on 29 December it unanimously elected Havel to the Presidency.

History had suggested to the Czechoslovaks that their own initiatives would be crushed by systemic forces over which they had no control. In November 1989, however, Czechoslovaks had taken their history into their own hands; but they did so only after developments in all their neighbouring states - Poland, Hungary and East Germany - made success seem plausible.

In 1918, President Masaryk announced to the Czechoslovaks that their country had been returned to them. In 1989, President Havel proclaimed that their government had been returned to them.

The success of the country would rely again on the ability of its leaders to guide it against systemic challenges from within and without. As suggested throughout this chapter, Czechoslovakia's leaders have often been criticised for being unable to act in times of crisis. H. Gordon Skilling contended that, of Czechoslovakia's leaders to 1989, 'Only Masaryk proved himself capable of measuring up to the high standards which he himself had set'. But, he considers Václav Havel to be 'a leader of intellect and courage in the mould of Masaryk'.¹²¹

The way in which, and the success with which Havel pursued his vision of Czechoslovakia's role in the world would be thoroughly tested. We now turn to the personalities of Havel and his foreign minister, and the ideas which they pursued in their foreign policy.

¹²¹ Skilling, 'Lions or Foxes', p. 19 and p. 20.

CHAPTER 2

THE NEW PERSONALITIES OF CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN POLICY AND THEIR 'IDEALISM'

[A] sense of responsibility grows out of the experience of certain moral imperatives that compel one to transcend the horizon of one's personal interests and be prepared at any time to defend the common good, and even to suffer for it. Just as our 'dissidence' was anchored in this moral ground, so the spirit of our foreign policy should grow and, more important, continue to grow from it.¹

So wrote Havel in 1992 on the nature of Czechoslovak foreign policy: not only rooted in the moral thinking he had developed prior to 1989 but also continuing to flourish from it.

Havel's declaration brings to mind the definition Robert Endicott Osgood gave to idealism in *Ideals and Self-Interest in American Foreign Policy*. He defined idealism as 'a standard of conduct or a state of affairs worthy of achievement by virtue of its universal moral value. The motive of national idealism is the disposition to concern oneself with moral values that transcend the nation's selfish interests; it springs from selflessness and love'.² In using 'idealism' to describe the thinking of the Czechoslovak dissidents who became political leaders after the 1989 revolution, the thesis does not refer specifically to the International Relations school of the same name.

There is, however, some useful overlap. An idealist is classically defined as 'one who sees such values as justice or a desire for world peace as potentially decisive and capable of overcoming obstacles to their realization. An idealist considers ideas as having important causal effects

¹ Václav Havel, *Summer Meditations on Politics, Morality and Civility in a Time of Transition* (London & Boston: Faber and Faber, 1992), pp. 98-9. The English version of the original *Letní přemítání* is used here because it was written later and includes additions on foreign policy.

² Robert Endicott Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in American Foreign Policy*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1965, p. 4.

as opposed to others who see power or material factors as determinants of political outcomes'.³ Thus, 'idealism' here is taken as the primacy of ideas over material factors, including and especially geopolitical determinism. The ideas of Czechoslovak 'idealism' will be shown to be the belief in morality and truth and the pursuit of policies because of their universal validity.

While Osgood provides a useful working definition of national idealism against which to compare both the thoughts and the actions of the Havel leadership, he also provides a caveat: 'In neither personal nor international relations does one find pure idealism or pure self-interest but only a strange mingling of ambiguous and contradictory ends and motives'.⁴

It might be that every pronouncement and policy by Havel's government could be deemed realism cloaked as idealism. Ascribing selfish national interest to post-communist Czechoslovak foreign policy suggests that the dissidents were dishonest or misguided in their pre-1989 beliefs. As the thesis will demonstrate, Czechoslovakia's post-Communist leaders sought to translate their pre-1989 ideals into policy, but they were also aware of national interest. The outcome was indeed 'a mingling' of idealism and pragmatism. The concern here is the extent to which those ideals were compromised

This chapter seeks to outline who the dissidents were and what they believed. In addition to providing an outline of the dissident ideas to which reference is made in the rest of the thesis, this chapter will apply these beliefs to instances of foreign policy. In the chapter biographies are given of the two figures most central to the

³ Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi (eds), *International Relations Theory* (2nd edn) (New York: Macmillan, 1993), p. 583.

⁴ Osgood, *Ideals*, p. 4.

conceptualisation of post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy, President Václav Havel and Foreign Minister Jiří Dienstbier.

The second section of the chapter demonstrates how the post-communist leadership believed and used the content of pre-revolutionary dissident writings as a blueprint for the conceptualisation and conduct of politics once in power. The reasons for taking the dissidents, and then the dissident-leadership at their word are then considered. Finally, the use of the term 'dissident' is justified and the extent to which dissident thinking can be called an ideology is considered.

The content of, and influences on, the ideology of the dissidents are considered in the third section: geography and economic backwardness; parallel *polis* or parallel society; truth; irony; symbolism; two elements of the 'common crisis' between East and West: alienation and 'megamachinery'; responsibility; apology and forgiveness; resistance; and legality. Two final subsections consider free will in the dissident thinking and then how 'realist' the dissidents might be said to have been. Examples of how this thinking might be evident in post-communist foreign policy are given.

PERSONALITIES OF POST-COMMUNIST CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN POLICY

The two people examined here were considered most influential and responsible for conceptualising and directing post-communist Czechoslovak foreign policy: Václav Havel and Jiří Dienstbier.

Václav Havel

Perhaps the most famous Czechoslovak dissident, Havel as an individual has come to personify the changes of 1989. His role in the development of dissident thinking and the pursuit of dissident causes is well-known, and his voluminous writings are examined. Space does not allow for a detailed

examination of his personality but there are some personal details which may be relevant to the development of his ideas.

Havel considers himself to have been an outsider all of his life. As he told an audience at Hebrew University in April 1990, 'I am even convinced in my heart of hearts that if Kafka had not lived, and if I could write a little better than I can, I would have written his complete works myself'. Explaining that 'I have always found in Kafka a part of my own experience of the world, myself, and my way of being in this world', he added 'there is the strong sense of both my not belonging and of the inappropriateness of everything that contributes to these feelings'.⁵ In the same speech, he even went so far as to attribute all the good he has undertaken to his sense of exclusion: 'my inner feelings of exclusion or non-inclusion, of a sort of disinheritedness and essential ineptitude...are the hidden motor of all my persistent endeavours....Indeed, I would be so bold as to say that anything good I have ever done, I possibly did only to try to conceal my well-nigh metaphysical feeling of guilt'.⁶

Havel's biography substantiates such a self-portrait. Born in 1936 in Prague to a prominent and wealthy family, he considered himself somewhat 'socialist' and thus felt alienated from his station. His bourgeois background contributed to his misfortune under communism, which included the denial of formal education. It might be significant to note here that many of the Czech writers who gained fame abroad, like Ivan Klíma, Pavel Kohout, Milan Kundera, and Ludvík Vaculík had at one time been Party members and thus entitled to state-sponsored artistic

⁵ Václav Havel, 'Franz Kafka and My Presidency', in Tim D. Whipple (ed.), *After the Velvet Revolution* (New York: Freedom House, 1991) pp. 101-2.

⁶ Quoted in Robert B. Pynsent, *Questions of Identity* (Budapest, London and New York: Central European University Press, 1994), p. 12

forums.⁷ Havel, however, for his efforts to gain access to the official literary circles, if only to be an iconoclast, was never a Party member.

Liberalization during the Prague Spring, however, gave Havel's works a public audience but he was subsequently banned from official cultural activities under normalization and subjected to constant police surveillance. His dissident campaigning included co-founding Charter 77 and serving as one of its leading spokesmen. His simultaneous membership of the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Persecuted (known by its Czech acronym of VONS), put him in jail for four and a half years. During the Velvet Revolution he emerged as the leading figure, addressing crowds of hundreds of thousands in Wenceslas Square and in the enormous parade ground of Letná. In so doing, he appeared at various times together with Alexander Dubček and Communist Premier Ladislav Adamec (whose reception by the crowds was mixed).⁸ Arguably, Havel thereby appeared as a representative of change but also as someone who could bridge numerous societal divides and deal with the communist regime which he was to do as head of the opposition team in negotiations with the regime. As his writings show, and as is discussed below, forgiveness and inclusion even of enemies were central themes in his thinking. As a German journalist wrote, 'Havel was never a raging warrior against the communist state, badgering the regime with Solzhenytsin-type hate: He offered dialogues, one after another, which the regime either ignored or accepted as a reason for renewed repression'.⁹

⁷ As observed in *ibid.*, p. 1. An account of the official writers' association is given in Dušan Hamšík, *Writer Against Rules* (New York: Random House, 1971).

⁸ See Wheaton and Kavan, *Velvet Revolution*, p. 89.

⁹ Michael Frank, 'CSSR: Will Vaclav Havel Be State President', *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 12 December 1989, in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service. Daily Report. East Europe*, 2 January 1990, p. 16. Cited hereafter as *FBIS*, with citations from the East Europe series unless otherwise indicated.

As Communist officials resigned from the Presidium and Central Committee in the wake of mass demonstrations and a general strike, Havel's name was quickly and ubiquitously chanted in the slogan 'Havel na Hrad', 'Havel to the Castle', seat of the President. On 29 December 1989, the Federal Assembly elected him the first non-Communist President in more than forty years, and he was re-elected on 5 July 1990.

Despite agreeing twice to stand for President of the Czechoslovak Federation and once for that of the Czech Republic, it is well known that Havel has consistently maintained that he never sought to be nor considers himself a politician. This view stems from, and also contributes to, his conception of anti-political politics. Havel wrote of himself: 'I am not, have never been, nor have I the slightest intention of becoming a politician, a professional revolutionary or professional "dissident". I am a writer, writing what I want and not what others might like me to, and if I get involved in any other way except by my writing, then only because I feel this to be my natural human and civic duty, as well as my duty as a writer'.¹⁰

If this is true, then it is an interesting insight which explains Havel's approach to politics. Politics is, for him, an extension of a moral civic duty. This might help to explain the seemingly unorthodox practices of his diplomacy.

Jiří Dienstbier

Born in 1937, Dienstbier is a contemporary of Havel, but unlike him, enjoyed formal education at the prestigious Faculty of Philosophy of Charles University. He joined the Party in 1958 and subsequently won plum foreign correspondent posts for Czechoslovak radio, including in the

¹⁰ Václav Havel, "'I Take the Side of Truth'", in *Open Letters* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1991), p. 247.

Far East and Washington before being expelled under normalization and forced to undertake manual labour.

Considering himself a reform communist, Dienstbier was an original Charter signatory and subsequently spokesman and VONS member. He was convicted with Havel and spent three years in jail. He edited an underground international relations journal entitled *Čtverec* (Square) and in 1985 he published the *samizdat* work *Snění o Evropě* or *Dreaming about Europe*, his reflections on international affairs which, from his subsequent statements, are relevant to post-communist Czechoslovak foreign policy. He was given the chance to implement his thinking on foreign affairs in December 1989 when he quickly found a replacement for his work as a coalstoker in order to be sworn in by Gustav Husák as Foreign Minister in the post-Revolution coalition government.

DISSIDENT THINKING AND POST-COMMUNIST FOREIGN POLICY

Much of this thesis is predicated on the idea that the pre-1989 dissident literature explains the principles behind Czechoslovakia's post-Communist foreign policy. Before examining the ideas themselves, therefore, it is necessary to establish that their pre-1989 thinking actually did provide the intellectual basis for their post-1989 foreign policy. But an important prior question which must be addressed is extent to which the dissidents can be believed.

Havel's main English language biographer, *Guardian* reporter Michael Simmons, maintains that Havel has an almost obsessive preoccupation with the truth.

Both the form and content of words are themes in Havel's writings. He wrote to his wife in one of his letters from prison of the Orator in Ionesco's *The Chairs*. The Orator is asked by the Old Man and the Old Woman to deliver for them 'the meaning of life'. Havel concludes that he

does not want to sound like the Orator.¹¹ He uses the example to show that 'the meaning of life' is not something to be passed on like an item. But it is not simply the content which bothers him in this case, it also demonstrates his dislike for indirect communication.

As President, Havel took direct responsibility for that which was attributable to him. Even though he was accused of being aloof and removed from the people by having built around him layers of advisers composed of friends (see chapter 3), and despite the taxing demands of public office, Havel generally authored and delivered his own addresses. He and his Executive gave numerous press conferences, public declarations and interviews. Havel also broadcast a weekly Sunday radio address from Laný, Masaryk's presidential retreat which Havel came to use as his own, which was reproduced in print in such newspapers as *Lidové noviny*.

Of course, Havel used a spokesman, his friend Michal Žantovský, but the fact that Žantovský had to qualify, apologise or retract statements suggests that Havel's administration was careful to keep statements clearly attributable to Havel. As far as his own addresses were concerned, he was described not only as 'a leader who writes his own speeches; he is an iconoclast who rehearses'.¹²

If the form of his message is important to Havel, the content is even more so, for, much of the content of his philosophy concerned the now pat-phrase 'living in truth'. This has led him to reject any neat summation of his thinking, as will be discussed presently. For the purposes of establishing the credibility of the main personages and also the sources used in this study, it is helpful to cite Havel on his beliefs:

¹¹ Václav Havel, *Dopisy Olze* (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, Corp., 1985), pp. 257-260, at p. 260.

¹² Michael Simmons, *The Reluctant President* (London: Methuen, 1991), p. xvi.

Even though I naturally do have my own opinions on a variety of issues, I don't hold with any particular ideology, doctrine, or, even less, any political party or faction. I serve no one - much less any superpower. If I serve anything, then only my own conscience. I am neither a communist nor an anticommunist, and if I criticize my government, then not because it happens to be a communist government but because it is bad. Were this government a Social Democratic or Christian Socialist one, or any other, if it ruled badly I would criticize it in the same way as I criticize the Czechoslovak government. I am not on the side of any establishment, nor am I a professional campaigner *against* any establishment - I merely take the side of truth against lies, the side of sense against nonsense, the side of justice against injustice.¹³

If we are to see any validity in the message of the dissidents, then we must believe their language. This is because the use and abuse of language itself is a cornerstone of the dissident critique of the Soviet-type system and the correct use of language (as well as moral conduct) is central to their vision of conducting political and social life decently and correctly. Thus, the separation of thought from reality which results from the use of ideology (a fundamental issue to the dissidents) comes about 'chiefly through a ritualization of language. From being a means of signifying reality, and of enabling us to come to an understanding of it, language seems to have become an end in itself. In this process, language - and, because it is related to it, thought as well - may appear to have increased in importance (the duty to name things having been superseded by the duty to qualify things ideologically), but in fact language is thus degraded: the imputation to language of functions that are not proper to it has made it impossible for language to fulfill the function it was meant to fulfill. And thus, ultimately, language is deprived of its most essential importance'.¹⁴

Whatever term or shorthand might be used to describe the dissident philosophy (see below), there is nevertheless consistency within

¹³ Havel "'I Take the Side of Truth'", pp. 247-48.

¹⁴ Václav Havel, 'On Evasive Thinking', in *Open Letters*, p. 12.

the voluminous work of Havel and substantial consistency, not to mention cross-referencing, between the writings of all the major Czech and Slovak dissidents. 'To maintain one's position silently and constantly means more than shouting it out and then quickly abandoning it. A silent partner, of whom you can never predict when he will speak and what he will say, though you are certain that when he does speak it will be as clear as the striking on a bell, is far more capable of disquieting the world than someone everyone has figured out, as it were, beforehand'.¹⁵

When the dissidents came to power as a result of the Revolution, they were intent on putting their thinking into practice. On 20 November, when the Revolution was in its fourth day, Havel maintained that his values were already coming into political life. Speaking to foreign journalists in his flat, Havel said that 'the ideals for which I have been struggling for very many years and for which I have been in prison are beginning now to enter real political life as an expression of the will of the people'.¹⁶

Even close to the end of his service as President of the Czechoslovak Federation, Havel maintained that the beliefs he had developed while a dissident were valid. In March 1992, in the foreword of *Summer Meditations*, he wrote 'Naturally, faced with the increasing complications of our public life at home, I have become aware of how immensely difficult it is to be guided in practice by the principles and ideals in which I believe. But I have not abandoned them in any way'.¹⁷ He reiterated these views in an April 1992 *New York Review of Books* article. Replying rhetorically to the expectations of foreign journalists that he has had to retreat from his dissident thinking in the realities of

¹⁵ Havel, 'Two Letters from Prison,' [5 February 1983], in *Open Letters*, p. 236.

¹⁶ Cited in Simmons, *Reluctant President*, p. 183.

¹⁷ Havel, 'Foreword', *Summer Meditations*, p. xiii.

political life, he declared: 'There may be some who won't believe me, but after more than two years as president in a land full of the kind of problems that presidents in stable countries never even dream of, I can safely say that I have not been compelled to recant anything of what I wrote earlier, or to change my mind about anything. In fact, my opinions have been confirmed'.¹⁸ And, while admitting that such a route is difficult, he added 'My experience and observations confirm that politics as the practice of morality is possible'.¹⁹

If the content of Havel's beliefs were applicable after socialism as before, so too was his methodology. To an audience at George Washington University on 22 April 1993 he explained: 'I think we must not understand postcommunism merely as something that makes life difficult for the rest of the world. I certainly didn't understand communism that way. I saw it chiefly as a challenge, a challenge to thought and action. To an even greater extent, postcommunism represents precisely that kind of challenge'.²⁰

Other dissidents have perhaps not been as firm in the view that their pre-1989 discussions were the blueprint for post-Revolution politics. As Ján Čarnogurský wrote, 'Without knowing it, these dissident groups [in Czechoslovakia] were discussing the changes that Eastern Europe brought about' in 1989.²¹ If Čarnogurský was suggesting that the dissidents were not thinking in terms of a blueprint for after communism, then Dienstbier was clearer about the relationship of pre-1989 ideas and practices to post-1989 policies. Shortly after becoming Foreign Minister,

¹⁸ Václav Havel, 'Paradise Lost', *The New York Review of Books* (9 April 1992), p. 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁰ Havel, 'The Post-Communist Nightmare', *The New York Review of Books* (27 May 1993), p. 8.

²¹ Ján Čarnogurský, 'Physics, Psychology and the Gentle Revolution', in Whipple (ed.), p. 110.

he told the Polish newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* 'I would like to work in the same spirit as when we were in opposition'.²²

A cornerstone of post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy was the reunification of Germany and its role in the reunification of Europe. According to senior foreign policy advisor Saša Vondra, this programme was formulated under the Prague Appeal of 1985.

Outside observers affirm that the ideological foundations for post-1989 foreign policy came from dissident writings. Radio Free Europe's Jan Obrman wrote in September 1990 'it is important to keep in mind that most of those responsible for the formulation of Czechoslovak foreign policy are former dissidents who have known each other and exchanged views on international matters for years'. Furthermore, 'While these former members of the dissident community (today's decision makers) have differing opinions on virtually all domestic issues, they seem to be of almost one mind on international relations'. He added that 'Foreign policy concepts discussed within Czechoslovakia's dissident community under communist rule was dismissed as utopian by many experts and policymakers in the West. Some of these concepts, however, have become guidelines for postrevolutionary Czechoslovak foreign policy. Indeed, it could be argued that some concepts even foreshadowed developments in post-communist Europe'.²³

Questions of the soundness and quality of dissident thinking can of course be asked. The coherent translation of those premises into policy can be challenged. The success of those policies is also subject to criticism. Nevertheless, it is clear that the dissidents believed that their writings provided the basis, even a blueprint, not only for the specifics of Czechoslovak foreign policy but also as a normative programme for

²² *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21 December 1989, in *FBIS*, 2 January 1990, p. 22.

²³ Jan Obrman, 'Foreign Policy: Sources, Concepts, Problems', *Report on Eastern Europe*, Vol. 1, No. 37 (14 September 1990), p. 7.

international relations. It is to the content of the dissident thinking to which this chapter now turns.

Terminology

Two problems emergence in references to the people and work relevant to the study of post-communist Czechoslovak foreign policy. The first is the meaning of the term 'dissident' and the second is the question of whether dissident ideas can be called an 'ideology'.

Since the meaning of language was central to the identity of the dissident intellectuals, they were discerning in their use of terminology. In fact, the people that many Western observers called 'dissidents' generally preferred the term 'independent thinkers'. According to Jacques Rupnik, Havel even resented the term 'dissident',²⁴ and in his 'Power of the Powerless,' Havel referred to 'so-called' dissidents, and placed the term in quotation marks.

However, in accordance, with common usage, this thesis will refer to Czechoslovak and other independent thinkers before the collapse of communist power in the respective countries as 'dissidents', while mindful of the fact that they generally saw themselves not as dissenting from particular beliefs or practices but, rather, deliberately choosing to think independently of pronouncements made by anyone else.

In the same way that they qualified the term 'dissident', so too did Czechoslovakia's independent intellectuals raise objections to the term 'ideology'. From an analytical point of view, Havel did not use the term 'ideology' to describe 'the system of ideological norms, prohibitions, and

²⁴ Jacques Rupnik, *The Other Europe* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988), p. 131.

limitations that ensured the prolongation' of the communist system, but rather the 'metaphysical order'.²⁵

Havel certainly did not use the term to describe his own thinking. In fact, he was hesitant about the coherence of his thinking: He described his use of language as 'figurative, abbreviated, tentative', with his words being 'chosen for the occasion and are meant to serve only in particular sentences or to make specific observations'. This observation led Havel to reiterate 'that my meditations are not, nor are they meant to be, a philosophy, much less a philosophical system intended to add to the common property of mankind in that department. They are more the testimony of a man - myself - in a particular situation, of his inner murmurings. They are only (perhaps) an existential document (like poetry), an imprint in progress of the flow of my inner life, nothing more'. He added, even unnecessarily modestly, that he lacked the education and the experience to be a true philosopher.²⁶

Havel seems almost contemptuous of the weakness of those who need ideology. In one of his last letters during his longest prison sentence, he wrote: 'Someone who does not draw strength from himself and who is incapable of finding the meaning of his life within himself will depend on his surroundings, will seek the map to his own orientation somewhere outside himself - in some ideology, organization, or society, and then, however active he may appear to be, he is merely waiting, depending'.²⁷

Ideology destroys the individual's ability to act and be responsible. Havel explained in 'The Power of the Powerless' that 'Ideology is a specious way of relating to the world. It offers human beings the illusion of an identity, of dignity, and of morality while making it easier to part

²⁵ Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Reinventing Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), p. 138.

²⁶ Havel, *Dopisy Olze*, p. 272.

²⁷ Havel, 'Two Letters from Prison', [22 January 1983], p. 231.

with them'.²⁸ It is even more dehumanising because, once the political programme begins to fail, demoralisation sets in. This demoralisation, Havel contends, represents not simply demoralisation itself 'but rather one's own loss of certainty and a sense of the meaning of life. To quote myself: the world is lost only to the extent that I myself am lost'.²⁹

This is illustrated in Havel's seminal 'Power of the Powerless'. The greengrocer plants among his vegetables the placard 'Workers of the World, Unite!', even though it means nothing to him and he would at least be better served with a call to the international proletariat to buy vegetables. Personal identity is consumed by ideological conformity.

Freedom of action and responsibility is unambiguously central to dissident thinking, and any form of ideology is therefore antithetical. Havel was also aware of the danger that a set of beliefs could inhibit an understanding of, and response to, the 'real world'. This is demonstrated in his 'On Evasive Thinking', a piece dissecting the way the communist regime sought to direct people's attention from local affairs, which had both immediate salience to and potentially quick solutions for the larger issues of mankind and the future. He writes:

any intention can become its exact opposite if it is carried forward in the conventionalized, pseudoideological thinking that has become so dangerously domesticated in all areas of our social life. This way of thinking, in my opinion, is causing immense damage. The essence of it is that certain established dialectical patterns are deformed and fetishized and thus become an immobile system of intellectual and phraseological schemata which, when applied to different kinds of reality, seem at first to have achieved, admirably, a heightened ideological view of that reality, whereas in fact they have, without our noticing it, separated thought from its immediate contact with reality and thus crippled its capacity to intervene in that reality effectively.³⁰

²⁸ Václav Havel, 'Moc bezmocných', in *O lidskou identitu* (Purley, Surrey: Rozmluvy, 1989), pp. 55-133; 'The Power of the Powerless', in John Keane, (ed.), *The Power of the Powerless. Citizens Against the State in Central and Eastern Europe* (London: Hutchinson, 1985) 'Power of the Powerless'.

²⁹ Havel, 'Two Letters from Prison', [22 January 1983], p. 233.

³⁰ Havel, 'On Evasive Thinking', p. 11

Concern about terms was not idle dissident discussion. The preoccupation continued after the revolution. Dissident Milan Šimečka, for example, recounted how in the fifteen years prior to 1989 'I gradually had to eliminate words like "socialism," "communism" and "capitalism." Ideological abuse had colored their meaning to such a degree that I decided to get by without using them'. But, he wrote, the problem continued after the Revolution'. 'Now three months have passed since the beginning of the revolution, and I feel like dropping the words "democracy" and "democratic" as well - or at least stop pretending that we're all good democrats, even the people who aren't'.³¹

In office, Havel regularly warned of the dangers of succumbing to ideologies. This is evident throughout his speeches and, as late as a 1994 *Foreign Affairs* article, he cautioned against 'rational utopia', one of his names for ideology.³²

Since terminology formed an integral part of the writings of the dissidents, the words used to explain that writing must also be chosen carefully. The term 'ideology' will not be used here as a catchphrase for dissident writings. Havel's modesty demands that even the term 'philosophy' is unsuitable. Thus, 'thinking' has been adopted, with the caveat that it is meant in a value-free way.

CONTENT OF THE DISSIDENT THINKING

Material Origins of Dissident Thinking

Much of the dissident thinking, as will be discussed, revolved around the idea of no limitations to action. As indicated at the beginning of this

³¹ Milan Šimečka, 'Good Democrats All', May 1990, in Whipple (ed.), p. 261.

³² Havel, 'A Call for Sacrifice: The Co-Responsibility of the West', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (March/April 1994), p. 7.

chapter, 'idealists' believe that ideas, and not necessarily power and material conditions, can shape outcomes. Nevertheless, what might be called 'objective' limitations, such as relative economic condition and geographic location, seem to have had an influence on dissident thinking.

The economic influence

Outside observers have often commented on the backwardness of Eastern Europe and the impact of that on indigenous thought and action. As a leading political scientist remarked:

While Americans live in the present and think about the future almost compulsively, East Europeans are inclined to seek solace in the past, for their recent experiences have been full of adversity. It is nor perhaps too outlandish to say that had Darwin or Spencer been born in Poland or Hungary, they would never have gotten the idea that history was tantamount to evolution or progress, and would today be remembered as great theorists of decline and decay.³³

If 'backwardness' is synonymous with the premodern age of science and industry, then Havel can be read as nostalgic for that era. In 'Politics and Conscience', he refers to his childhood observations of the degradation of the natural world. He likens his reactions to that of a preindustrial peasant, seeing a factory for the first time. Each is more powerfully rooted in the natural world than the majority of their modern counterparts.³⁴ For Havel, it is in this pastoral world where personal responsibility - a key to Havel's essence - and the virtues of decency prevail.

The relative economic backwardness of the region also contributes to the thinking that the dissidents sought to oppose. Čarnogurský writes: 'Anger at their perpetual backwardness makes East Europeans look for

³³ Andrew C. Janos, 'Continuity and Change in Eastern Europe: Strategies of Post-Communist Politics', *East European Politics and Society* Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter 1994), p. 8.

³⁴ Havel, 'Politika a svědomí', in *Do různých stran*, pp. 41-2.

quick, dramatic solutions. The solution often has to be a psychological one, since we're not up to much technologically....Of all the East European countries, Czecho-Slovakia has been the one most influenced by the West, and shows the greatest combination of physics and psychology. In times of crisis, we seem to find psychological solutions very alluring, although they tend to mean a reduction in action more than a real solution'.³⁵ The dissident thinking might be motivated in part by the need to find solutions to this apparent 'fixed factor' of economic backwardness'.

The geographic influence

Similarly, the interpretation of Czechoslovakia's relative geographic size and location is a probable influence on the development of the 'idealism' as put into practice by the post-communist government. As Havel explained to the US Congress:

As you certainly know over the centuries most of Europe's major wars and other conflagrations have traditionally begun and ended on the territory of modern Czechoslovakia, or else they were somehow related to that region. The Second World War was the most recent example. This is understandable: whether we like it or not, we are located in the very heart of Europe....³⁶

By virtue of the fact that much of the dissident literature concerns itself with the 'possible' and, in its international dimension, specifically with the idea that geopolitics can be eliminated from international affairs, this suggests that geography was a background influence on the formation of the dissident thinking.

Recognising that economic and geographic factors could have provided a background on which the dissident thinking was constructed, this section now turns to aspects of that content, beginning with the central concept of parallel society.

³⁵ Čarnogurský, 'Physics', p. 106

³⁶ Speech to Congress, in Whipple (ed.)

The Ideas Themselves

The ideas of dissident thinking included: parallel society, symbolism, alienation, responsibility, apology, resistance and legality.

Civil or Parallel Society and 'Second Culture'

If any concept is central to dissident thinking it is civic or parallel society. This is an umbrella term which, because of its broad meaning, is not directly applicable to foreign policy. The first irony of a 'civic' foreign policy was that its initiators had occupied the seats of government and were forced to use official instruments in the pursuit of their objectives.

Civil society represented any form of thought or action which was outside the control of the official, or state-party structure. Civil society thus formed a parallel society which existed alongside the official. The nucleus of civic society, as Havel explained in 'Power of the Powerless', came from the Czech dissident Ivan Jirous.

According to Havel, Jirous's original intention was limited to 'nonconformist rock music and only certain literary, artistic or performance events close to the sensibilities of those non-conformist musical groups'. 'The term "second culture" very rapidly came to be used for the whole area of independent and repressed culture that is, not only for art and its various currents but also for the humanities, the social sciences and philosophical thought. This "second culture", quite naturally, has created elementary organizational forms: *samizdat* editions of books and magazines, private performances and concerts, seminars, exhibitions and so on....Culture, therefore, is a sphere in which the "parallel structures" can be observed in their most highly developed form. The Catholic philosopher and mathematician Václav Benda (who was later elected to the post-Communist Federal Parliament) gave thought to

potential or embryonic forms of such structures in other spheres as well: from a parallel information network to parallel forms of education (private universities), parallel trade unions, parallel foreign contacts, to a kind of hypothesis on a parallel economy'.³⁷

Symbolism

The use of symbolism was one expression of unorthodox thinking, and was important to Havel in particular, and to the Czechoslovak dissident movement as a whole. As H. Gordon Skilling wrote, 'Symbolism can be found in the fact that Charter 77 appeared on the scene in January, the month of the beginning of the Prague Spring of 1968. Moreover, as was pointed out in the declaration, its name had been chosen to denote that it had come into being at the start of a year which had been proclaimed as the Year of Political Prisoners, and the year in which a conference was to be held in Belgrade to review the implementation of the obligations assumed at the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe'.³⁸

As President, Havel used symbolism in his choice of dates. For example, Richard von Weizsäcker was invited to Prague Castle on the 51st anniversary of Hitler's triumphant entry. Havel planned to have French President François Mitterand and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher come to Prague on the anniversary of the Munich Conference, the official outcome of which neither leader had yet formally renounced.

Symbolism also contributed to Havel's diplomatic appointments, especially the choice of Rudolf Slánský, son of the 1953 Stalinist show trial victim of the same name, as Ambassador to Moscow. In his first meeting with Gorbachev, Havel offered the General Secretary a peace-pipe

³⁷ Havel, 'Power of the Powerless', p. 101.

³⁸ Skilling, *Charter 77*, p. 3.

given to him by Native Americans, suggesting that they both smoke from it.³⁹ Havel's own personal presentation - such as his refusal to use a teleprompter for his address to the US Congress - serves to underscore the authenticity of his actions.

Alienation

Alienation could be the origin (as Havel's autobiographical comments, above, suggest) of dissidence, but it certainly also constitutes a theme of dissident literature. Havel contends, as did the Czechoslovak reformist Marxists of the 1960s,⁴⁰ that individual morality and responsibility is being corrupted by modernisation. In 'Politics and Conscience', Havel juxtaposes traditional Czechoslovak small family farming to Communist collectivisation, the latter being an invasion of impersonalising bureaucracy. He is concerned generally with the effect of modernisation, attacking the emergence of 'megamachinery',⁴¹ but blaming not science itself for the consequences, but its misuse by man.⁴²

Through modernisation, man is thus separated from his natural world and is deprived of personal responsibility. The alienating effects of modernisation could only be overcome, according to a Charter 77 document, by society as a whole and by 'people's spontaneous initiative'. The problem of Czechoslovakia's Communist regime was the lack of channels for individual initiative. Society was atomised by

³⁹ Interview with Saša Vondra, 4 September 1994.

⁴⁰ Karel Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete. A Study on Problems of Man and World* (Dordrecht, Holland: D.Reidel Publishing Company, 1976); and Radovan Richta, *Civilization at the Crossroads*. Such comparison is not to suggest that Havel belongs to this tradition.

⁴¹ Havel, *Dálkový výslech*, p. 14.

⁴² Havel, 'Politika a svědomí', p. 146.

'institutionalization, coercion and bureaucratic interference,' preventing the creation of necessary trust.⁴³

For Havel, the solution lies in reformulating how we think, prioritise and act. This was true as much during communism in the East as in the West. To the US Congress Havel explained: 'Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for the better in the sphere of our being as humans, and the catastrophe towards which this world is headed - be it ecological, social, demographic, or a general breakdown of civilization - will be unavoidable. If we are no longer threatened by world war, or by the danger of absurd mountains of nuclear weapons blowing up the world, this does not mean that we have finally won. This is actually far from being a final victory'.⁴⁴

He also saw the commonality of crisis. In a 1994 *Foreign Affairs* article, he warned that if the West failed to take a more active role in Central and Eastern Europe, it would be not only a failure for the East but also for the values of the West. Such failure to act, he contended, 'could ultimately demonstrate that the democratic West has lost its ability realistically to foster and cultivate the values it has always proclaimed and undertaken to safeguard....Such a state of affairs would be far more than just a crisis of the East; it would be a crisis of the West, a crisis of democracy, a crisis of Euro-American civilization itself. Let events in the former Yugoslavia stand as a warning: this is not just a Balkan predicament'.⁴⁵

For Havel, the crises of one region are necessarily those of the world, and large powers have a particular duty and responsibility. Thus,

⁴³ Charter 77, *Document No. 9/85: On the Fortieth Anniversary of the End of World War Two*, cited in Janusz Bugajski, *Czechoslovakia: Charter 77's Decade of Dissent* (New York: Praeger 1987), pp. 6-7.

⁴⁴ Address to Congress, in Whipple, (ed.), p. 78.

⁴⁵ Havel, 'Call for Sacrifice', p. 3.

the crisis in Yugoslavia was not simply an 'Eastern form of nationalism' if the West remained indifferent, the crisis would signal the reemergence of nationalism in the West. Similarly, for the West to ignore the ecological catastrophe caused by Communism in Eastern Europe would 'sooner or later bring on its own ecological catastrophe, and ultimately a global one'.⁴⁶

Havel thus saw international responsibility arising from what he considered the common threat. In an April 1983 interview, Havel said of those abroad who lent support to persecuted intellectuals in Czechoslovakia: 'These people understood that whenever freedom and human dignity are threatened in any one country, they are under threat everywhere, that this signifies an attack on humanity itself and of the future of all of us'.⁴⁷

He was aware of the the difficulties of achieving the necessary common understanding. In 'Politics and Conscience', he observed, for example, how the Western peace movement misunderstood the purpose of Soviet bloc dissidents and the nature of the East-West arms race.

Nevertheless, some have suggested that Havel had limited personal experience. As Robert B. Pynsent observed, 'Even in the 1960s Havel did not have easy access to any societies but his own'. This means that while Havel deliberately sought that, for example in *Largo desolato*, that his plays not be performed abroad with a specifically Czech or socialist staging, the plot nevertheless, with a character awaiting the secret police, would still be atypical of the West.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁷ Havel, "'I Take the Side of Truth'", p. 239.

⁴⁸ Pynsent, *Questions of Identity*, pp. 6-7.

Still, 'the philosophical problem of this play may be universal'.⁴⁹

One of the features central to Havel's view of the common crisis is the role of 'responsibility.'

Responsibility

Havel emphasised the role of personal responsibility. For him, The individual cannot act and cannot be free without assuming responsibility for his actions. The essence of antipolitical politics has been defined as the 'unobtrusive attempt to restore the dignity of the individual'.⁵⁰

So key is responsibility to Havel's identity that Pynsent argues: 'Havel's central conception of identity is that it consists in the sum of one's responsibilities'.⁵¹ For Havel, responsibility is governed by one's sense of morality. As he explained to the US Congress: '...we still don't know how to put morality above politics, science and economics. We are still incapable of understanding that the only genuine grounding for all our actions - if they are to be moral - is responsibility. Responsibility to something higher than family, country, company, success. Responsibility to that level of being where all our actions are indelibly recorded and where they will be properly judged'.⁵² It was this idea of taking responsibility for one's own thoughts and deeds - as embodied in 'Power of the Powerless' - which convinced a young Czech like Saša Vondra to become a dissident and a member of Charter 77.⁵³

Personal responsibility extends to the national level. Havel wrote in his 'Anatomy of Reticence' that '[t]o my countrymen I have always

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Tismaneanu, *Reinventing Politics*, p. 146.

⁵¹ Pynsent, *Questions of Identity*, p. viii.

⁵² Address to Congress, in Whipple (ed.), p. 79.

⁵³ This is based on the personal experience of Vondra. Interview.

stressed that we should not lie our way out of our responsibility and blame everything on overall conditions, on the superpowers and on the bad, bad world at large'.⁵⁴

Just as national responsibility could be seen as the aggregate of personal responsibility, so for Havel the responsibility of a country's leadership is immense. He wrote to Dubček after he had consented to Soviet demands in 1968 and 1969 that it is the leadership which decides how the populations are to behave: 'Society is also, to a certain extent, a "function" of its politicians and its elites. These elites act on society and mobilize those forces within it that can be mobilized. Cowardly policies encourage cowardice in society; courageous policies stimulate people's courage'. In terms of how the Czechoslovaks behave, Havel wrote: 'Our nations have a capacity for both cowardly and courageous behavior, for demonstrating holy zeal or selfish indifference. Czechs and Slovaks are capable of struggling heroically or shamelessly denouncing their neighbors. Which of these propensities prevails at a given moment, both in society and in individuals, largely depends on what situation the political elite has created, the choices it places before the people, the qualities it encourages in them: in short, it depends on what the elite's activities and examples stimulate'.⁵⁵

Very clearly, Havel sees the ability to act - and the ability to challenge the entire system - in the individual taking responsibility. As such, he tends very much towards accepting responsibility as well as guilt. For political life to proceed, past misdeeds must be accounted for.

⁵⁴ Havel, 'Anatomy of Reticence', pp. 169-70.

⁵⁵ Havel, 'Letter to Alexander Dubček', in *Open Letters*, p. 47.

Apology and Forgiveness

A theme common to much of the Czechoslovak dissident literature follows from Havel's sense of 'responsibility': self-examination and improvement. As Šimečka wrote in April 1990, as the debate in Czechoslovakia intensified over whether to remove Communist specialists from office: 'I object to radicals offering people an easy way to cleanse themselves. You're all innocent, and it's only the owners of Party cards who are guilty. There's no great morality in pointing an accusatory finger and thus wiping the slate clean of any shared guilt. Scrutiny of one's own sins, as every believer knows, is the best way to achieve self-improvement'.⁵⁶

Havel told the West German magazine *Der Stern* shortly after having become President that 'there is something good in each person, whether the person in question is a justly sentenced prisoner or a tyrannical warder'. He was confident of success in 'creating an atmosphere that evokes better qualities in people'.⁵⁷

Havel's view of prisons helps to illustrate his concern not for punishment but for forgiveness: 'Again and again I realized that prison was not intended merely to deprive a man of a few years of his life and make him suffer for that length of time, rather it was intended to mark him for life, destroy his personality, score his heart in such a way that it would never heal completely. Prison thus seems to me something like a futurological laboratory of totalitarianism'.⁵⁸

In practical terms, this belief explains Havel's decision soon after becoming President to issue a general amnesty to prisoners. This act was

⁵⁶ Milan Šimečka, 'Between Danton and Robespierre', in Whipple (ed.), p. 258.

⁵⁷ Prague Domestic Service, 11 January 1990, in FBIS, 12 January 1990, p. 16. commenting on interview with Havel published in *Der Stern*, 11 January 1990.

⁵⁸ Havel, '"I Take the Side of Truth"', p. 240.

heavily criticized, since common criminals went free and several new murders were committed by amnestied convicted killers.

But Havel went even further than forgiveness. The personal side of both Havel and Dienstbier shows their understanding and compassion for their persecutors. When asked after release from prison if he ever felt hatred towards his jailors, Havel replied: 'No, I don't know how to hate, and that pleases me. If for no other reason, then because hatred clouds the vision and makes it difficult to seek the truth'.⁵⁹

Similarly, when asked how he felt about being sworn in as Foreign Minister by Husák, who had been ultimately responsible for his persecution, Dienstbier told interviewers 'I never took it personally, so I did not experience any of the feelings that you are no doubt thinking of'.⁶⁰

On the national level, Havel's sense of responsibility and the need to apologise converge in his response to normalization. In a letter, Havel called on Dubček to apologize on behalf of the nation for agreeing to a falsehood: 'It may occur to you...that I am actually asking you to wash away the sins of all of us, to make the symbolic, redemptive sacrifice that our nations are themselves incapable - unsymbolically - of making'.⁶¹

A combination of related elements discussed so far can be observed in Havel's foreign policy. These are individual responsibility, the responsibility of the leader, the need to base actions on morality, and the need to cleanse previous wrong-doings in order to proceed. They assert themselves most starkly in Havel's declaration of the need for Czechoslovakia to apologise for the postwar expulsion of nearly 3 million Sudeten Germans. The apology was framed in terms of that expulsion

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

⁶⁰ *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21 December 1989, in *FBIS*, 2 January 1990, p. 22.

⁶¹ Havel, 'Letter to Alexander Dubček', pp. 46-7.

having been possible only by an embryonic totalitarian system. This would mean an indigenous Czechoslovak totalitarianism which preceded Communism. The only way for a democratic society to be reconstructed, in Havel's view, was to undo the processes that allowed for such totalitarian practices in the first place.⁶²

Apology not only contributed to the content but also the form of Havel's diplomacy. As the first leader of a Warsaw Pact country to address NATO, he apologized 'for the lies which my predecessors were for years telling you about'.⁶³

It is this combination of responsibility, apology and forgiveness that makes the domestic practice of lustration, as discussed in chapter 3, so peculiar in Czechoslovakia.⁶⁴ It also helps to explain how VONS, which became an official organization after the Revolution, and continued to issue reports, censured the arrest of two communists for 'slandering the president' in an autumn 1990 report.⁶⁵

Resistance

Havel's sense of responsibility is all the more striking in a country in which external threat were felt so strongly. An important theme in Czechoslovak history has been the way in which a nation, which defines itself as 'small', could withstand systemic threats. Havel believed that resistance was always possible. This belief arose in part because his interpretation of the role of personal responsibility in political life (above) and his reinterpretation of the sources of power (below). As a result, he could see the possibility of resistance in various circumstances.

⁶² Havel, "I Take the Side of Truth", p. 240.

⁶³ Cited in John Palmer, 'Nato Misguided in Keeping Out East Europeans, Havel Says', *The Guardian*, 22 March 1991.

⁶⁴ This is detailed in the decision-making chapter.

⁶⁵ Noted in *Open Letters*, p. 109.

Dubček explained his lack of resistance in 1968 with the phrase 'Look at the map'. By contrast, while acknowledging Soviet pressure on Dubček, Havel prodded the ousted Communist Party General Secretary in an August 1969 letter to '[r]emember the dilemma Edvard Beneš faced at the time of Munich. In those days it was not demagogy - there was a real danger that the nation would be exterminated'. Havel also pointed out that Communists were capable of effective resistance: 'And at that time [1938], it was you, the communists, who resisted the persuasive arguments for capitulation, and who rightly understood that a *de facto* defeat need not be a moral defeat; that a moral victory may later become a *de facto* victory'.⁶⁶

This thinking dovetails with themes in Czechoslovak history about the meaning of resistance and victory and about how to prevent what Czechoslovak historians and thinkers, from Masaryk to Kundera, have referred to as the problem or fate of small nations.

The dissidents believed that victory did not necessarily lie in arms, but that the definition of victory had to be changed. One of the tactics was to 'win' in the terms that the regime was using. This meant using legality to the dissidents' advantage.

Legality

Part of the tactics of Czechoslovak dissidents, and of dissidents throughout the Soviet bloc, was to resist within the terms of existing laws of Czechoslovakia. In his account of Article 202 of the Czechoslovak Criminal Code, one of the charges which gave Communist authorities considerable flexibility to arrest people such as the dissidents, Havel describes anecdotally how his possible reactions to provocation would only

⁶⁶ Havel, 'Letter to Alexander Dubček', p. 40.

result in his arrest and treatment as a common criminal.⁶⁷ This situation, he writes, prevents him from acting 'as a man' and defending himself. Thus, not only would other means have to be found, but, as the dissidents would argue, more effective means existed. Not surprisingly, therefore, their resistance did not take the form of armed insurrection. Indeed, it did not, as discussed elsewhere, even take the form, in their view, of political opposition.

While the dissidents suffered from the elastic nature of the regime's laws, as Havel details of his own experience under Articles 202 and 203, they worked all the more to take state laws at face value. This was not a tactic exclusive in the Soviet bloc to Czechoslovak dissidents but it had a profound effect on post-revolutionary politics, as will be evident in chapter 7.

International agreements to which the regime consented were particularly useful to the Czechoslovak dissidents. Foremost was the Helsinki Accords. This allowed Charter 77 to condemn the Czechoslovak declaration on the seventeenth anniversary of the Soviet intervention as being 'in breach of the principles of international law, including the provisions of the Warsaw Pact'.⁶⁸

In their foreign policy, the Czechoslovak dissidents took international agreements very seriously, not least because of the value they attributed to the adoption and application of the Helsinki Accords.

Universality

The care with which Havel describes his own thoughts is evident. He offers the caveat 'I don't claim that any of my formulations are

⁶⁷ '202' and '203', in Havel, *O lidskou identitu*, pp. 156-62 and 163-69.

⁶⁸ Cited in Bugajski, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 4.

The totality of such thinking is that the nature of political power is reconceptualised.

The Form and Content of a 'Civic' Foreign Policy

This chapter showed that Czechoslovakia's dissidents believed that their pre-1989 beliefs constituted a 'civic' politics which was applicable to post-Revolution society. Similarly, the chapter illustrated how the new Czechoslovak leadership believed that its foreign policy was to grow from the same spirit and values. It is therefore necessary to determine the form and content of a 'civic' foreign policy.

The overriding feature is the belief that ideas have powerful causal effects and that outcomes are not, cannot be conceived as determined by power or material factors. A civic foreign policy could thus be expected to take a different view from other foreign policies on power distributions in the international system and potential changes to it, such as the unification of Germany. It would also aim to eliminate power politics from the international system

A civic foreign policy would be concerned with morality. It would see morality as an aim in its own right but would also view the lack of morality as a hindrance to other aims. Outstanding historical wrongs would have to be addressed before other policies could be pursued.

A civic foreign policy would transcend parochial national interests to be concerned with what it identifies as global crises. Because such a foreign policy would be deeply concerned with personal and national responsibility, it would interpret crises as a common responsibility of mankind. Demonstrations of solidarity with those persecuted by corrupt regimes would stem not only from the morality of the civic foreign policy but from the practical experience the dissidents had of international support before 1989.

The makers of a civic foreign policy would expect it to be an expression of democratic will and to serve as a means for man to regain control over his destiny. Just as the Havel did want 'megamachinery' to influence the direction of domestic policy, neither would he want it in foreign policy.

A civic foreign policy would observe the legality of existing structures, even if they sought to change them, in the same way that dissidents worked within the legal systems of the Communist regimes. But because of the restrictions on their ability to express themselves, unconventional forms of expression like symbolism took on greater importance. Thus, the form of a civic foreign policy could be expected to be different from conventional practice.

The success with which the Czechoslovak dissidents implemented such a programme is the focus of the remaining chapters. But let us turn first to post-Communist foreign policy decision making in Czechoslovakia.

CHAPTER 3

PLURALISM, FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING AND THE RETURN OF THE ENTRENCHED INSTITUTIONAL INTERESTS

Czechoslovakia's democratic revolution of November 1989 saw the involvement of virtually every segment of society and government agency: Slovaks, Hungarians, and Czechs, academicians and industrial workers, students and elderly cleaning women, artists and theatre workers, deposed communists and the acclaimed dissidents. Members of the state news agency supplied equipment and facilities, and the secret police, the hitherto bulwark of one of the most hardline regimes in the socialist bloc, actually had its agents lead the student marches which culminated in the protests of hundreds of thousands.¹

Such widespread involvement of the population might suggest that decision-making after the revolution would be characterised by greater societal involvement than was the case before. Instead, however, a contraction of decision-making occurred, particularly in the realm of foreign policy. The inputs into post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy that are identified here will be shown to have been either unintended or the expression of entrenched interests. Whatever their origins, they demonstrate the inability of the new leadership to achieve the type of foreign policy they sought and believed possible.

This chapter seeks to establish how such a situation has arisen. Two developments in politics in the forty years of communist rule are relevant: the gradual decentralization of absolute, centralized party control; and the continuous and sustained development of a parallel society, with increasingly significant organizations of the population being outside party and state control.

¹ For accounts of the 1989 Revolution, see bibliography, part 7.

Political decision-making in the post-Communist countries of Central and East Europe cannot be divorced from the legacy of socialist rule.² In order to understand more comprehensively the decision-making processes in contemporary Czechoslovakia, and indeed in any of its neighbours, it is indispensable to consider how decision-making evolved in the Soviet bloc.

The chapter begins by examining the original model and 'the best-known and most widely' accepted model devised³ for the interpretation of politics in the Soviet-type system: Carl J. Friedrich's and Zbigniew Brzezinski's totalitarian model.⁴ Also examined are modifications to this model and their implications for our understanding of these political systems. The strength and influence of groups and bodies not connected to the Party-State structure - an 'opposition' - are then considered. The argument is made that the existence and strength of unofficial civic movements also indicated a pluralisation of politics in Soviet-type regimes.

The next section examines decision-making in post-Communist Czechoslovakia, and argues that a contraction in the number of people and bodies involved in foreign policy decision making occurred after the Revolution. It does so by examining the impact of the lustration law generally on the political process, as well its particular effect on institutions which may have been expected to contribute to foreign-policy making: the secret services and the military. The roles of the Federal

² This is the argument in what likely constitutes the first academic work on post-Communist Czechoslovakia: Wolchik, *Czechoslovakia, passim*. This theme is approached more broadly in Zoltan Barany and Ivan Volgyes (eds), *The Legacies of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

³ Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 519.

⁴ Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956). Citations are from a later printing (New York: Praeger, 1964), but remain valid for reference to the original publication. References hereafter to the totalitarian model, unless stated otherwise, refer to the Friedrich-Brzezinski model.

Foreign Ministry, Federal Finance Ministry and the Federal Foreign Trade Ministry will also be examined.

The final section examines the rapid re-emergence of old institutional interests or the institutionalisation of new ones, which resulted in contradictions of Federal Czechoslovak foreign policy and which undermined the Foreign Ministry's monopoly. The policy areas examined include arms sales and nuclear energy, as well as the institutionalisation of Slovak 'foreign policy' issues through the establishment of the Slovak Ministry of International Relations.

FROM THE TOTALITARIAN MODEL TO PRESSURE GROUPS

It is necessary to establish how bureaucratic interests came to manifest themselves in Soviet-type systems, particularly since the widely accepted totalitarian model contended a high degree of centralisation in such polities. Briefly, the well-known characteristics of the Friedrich and Brzezinski model are: (1) an official ideology; (2) a single mass party; (3) a network of 'terroristic police control'; (4) control of media; (5) control of military; and (6) the central control of the complete economy by means of administrative co-ordination of previously autonomous corporate agencies.⁵ The central assertion of the totalitarian model is that the leadership aims to destroy any barrier between the state and society, thereby gaining unchallenged and 'total control over' society and the citizenry'.⁶

In spite of its acceptance in the study of Soviet-type regimes, the applicability of the totalitarian model, as embodied in Stalin's Russia, to Eastern Europe is questionable. The creation of socialist regimes in that

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10. The characteristics are each described in detail in the appropriate chapters of the book.

⁶ See, among others, Hough and Fainsod, *Soviet Union*, p. 519.

region occurred towards the end of the 1940s, leaving little time for them to consolidate power and implement programmes, particularly in the economic sphere, that would fully mimic their Soviet inspiration. As Brzezinski chronicles in *The Soviet Bloc*, Soviet-occupied Eastern Europe still had a strong bourgeoisie possessing political forces, workers remained to an extent under 'right-wing socialists,' and the peasant parties generally proved hostile to the indigenous Communist Parties. The concept of the 'People's Democracy' as a transitional phase in the development of the fledgling East European regime demonstrated the view of Soviet Marxists that they were unready even for a socialist revolution, let alone the advanced stage of the Soviet state.⁷ Robert Sharlet concurs, arguing that the process of Stalinization in Eastern Europe was unable to run its full course before Stalin's death in 1953. As a result, Eastern European Communist Parties were unable to conclude 'the social penetration and politicization of their respective societies', although they gained control of the state bodies which assured significant control over those societies.⁸ These views caution that the totalitarian model cannot be fully applied to at least some Eastern European regimes. We are forced, however, to proceed with the investigation because Friedrich and Brzezinski declare that after the death of Stalin in 1953, Communist societies became more totalitarian.⁹

The inadequacy of the totalitarian model in explaining the nature of politics, and the nature of change in politics, in Soviet-type systems was

⁷ Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 23-27.

⁸ Robert Sharlet, 'Human Rights and Wrongs: Dissent and Repression in Eastern Europe', in Nicholas N. Kittrie and Ivan Volgyes, (eds), *The Uncertain Future: Gorbachev's Eastern Europe* (New York: Paragon House: 1988), p. 85.

⁹ Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship*, p. 300. See also H. Gordon Skilling, 'Interest Groups and Communist Politics', *World Politics* Vol. 18, No.3 (March 1966), pp. 436-7.

aply demonstrated by the emergence of many totalitarian 'sub-types' which emphasised or de-emphasised the characteristics advanced by Friedrich and Brzezinski. In the two decades following the publication of *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, as many as ten major variations were devised.¹⁰

One of the more significant, according to some commentators,¹¹ was the notion of 'tendencies' or interest groups in Communist politics. This approach argued that group conflict in Soviet politics had previously been viewed as struggles between factions at the upper-most levels of the Party. H. Gordon Skilling disputed the contention of that model, which implied that 'groups' in Soviet politics were simply tools to be manoeuvred in the jockeying for power. Instead, he argued, they possessed, and pursued interests of their own. He defined these groups as having common 'characteristics and attitudes on public issues' and which actively pursued their own interests in a bargaining process.¹²

The corporatist theory adopted a similar approach to Communist politics as the interest group model, but emphasized that it was the state that determined the groups or agencies which would have representation in the decision-making process. The model perceived an agreement between the state and the institution: In return for the latter's monopoly

¹⁰ A genealogy of these models is offered in Andrzej Korbonski, 'Ideology Disabused: Communism Without a Face in Eastern Europe', in Kittrie and Volgyes (eds), p. 46; and Andrew C. Janos, 'Systemic Models and the Theory of Change in the Comparative Study of Communist Politics', in Andrew C. Janos, (ed.), *Authoritarian Politics in Communist Europe. Uniformity & Diversity in One-Party States* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1976), p. 1.

¹¹ Andrzej Korbonski calls the interest group model the 'most important watershed' in Soviet bloc politics since the totalitarian model. 'The "Change to Change" in Eastern Europe', in Jan F. Triska and Paul M. Cocks (eds), *Political Development in Eastern Europe* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 3.

¹² H. Gordon Skilling, 'Groups in Soviet Politics: Some Hypotheses', in H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths (eds), *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 19-24.

of representation in its area of concern, it must function within perimeters established by the state.¹³

The interest group and the corporatist models were important because each challenged the totalitarian model on the grounds that it disregarded the role of semi-autonomous institutions in the policy process in Soviet-type regimes. Significantly, however, neither of them made a substantial break with the totalitarian model, for they did not dispute the overall supremacy of the Party. These models, however, helped to confront the problem of the static nature of the totalitarian construct, which Brzezinski himself recognized with his 'convergence theory' in *Political Power: USA/USSR*,¹⁴ in which the term totalitarian is deliberately not used.¹⁵

In spite of its relative acceptance in the study of Soviet politics, the interest group model, as Korbonski remarks, has not been applied to the East European setting,¹⁶ even though by 1970 authors such as Samuel Huntington saw it as appropriate.¹⁷ One rare attempt was Carl Beck's 'Bureaucracy and Political Development in Eastern Europe'. The emphasis of his work, which predated the interest group model, is a study of the relationship between the bureaucracy and political development by applying classical bureaucratic theory to Eastern Europe

¹³ A concise explanation is given by Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg, *Policy-making in China: Leaders, Structures and Processes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 397.

¹⁴ Zbigniew K. Brzezinski and Samuel P. Huntington *Political Power: USA/USSR* (New York: The Viking Press, 1963), pp. 419-436.

¹⁵ Skilling, 'Interest Groups', p. 441.

¹⁶ Korbonski, 'Change to Change', p. 11.

¹⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, 'Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems', in Samuel P. Huntington and Clement H. Moore, (eds), *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society* (New York and London: Basic Books, 1970), pp. 437-50, cited in *ibid.*, p. 12.

to assess the impact of modernization.¹⁸ He finds that in the early 1960s, 'pressure toward professional autonomy' by bureaucratic groups such as those later identified by the proponents of the interest group model was already evident, but it was not great enough to form a major challenge to the East European political systems.¹⁹ Nevertheless, he foresaw the emergence of a 'second New Class' composed of managers created by the modernization efforts of the respective regimes. The priority of these new societal groups, he contends, would not be ideological zeal but the protection of their own interests and well-being.²⁰

What the interest group and corporatist models, and variations on these theories, demonstrated was the devolution of absolute power in Communist regimes. They argued that some influence was now held by institutional entities; but these institutional entities were integral parts of the system, and were thus in partnership with the regime.

Such a devolution of power came as a result of modernisation of the economy and the increased importance given to technocrats and specialists. Whereas in the Soviet Cultural Revolution of 1928-32, during which Stalin's Communist Party deemed itself the first, last and only authority on science, industry, culture and technology, and set political reliability over professional expertise,²¹ the post-Stalin leadership, with the exception of the continued prominence of biologist Trofim Lysenko,

¹⁸ Carl Beck, 'Bureaucracy and Political Development in Eastern Europe', in Joseph LaPalombara (ed.), *Bureaucracy and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 268.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 288-9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

²¹ Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).

began to realize the indispensable role of the specialists on the basis of their own professional merits.²²

The correlation between the party's loss of power and the gain of power by technocrats and specialists is evidenced, as Vladimir Kusin illustrates, in the crackdown in Czechoslovakia after the Prague Spring. In order to forestall the resurgence of such a reform movement, or to punish it, 'the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and Moscow had to sacrifice some of the modernisation requirements which were indispensable for the attainment of technical rationality and economic efficiency'.²³ As François Fejtö observes, Marxist revisionists throughout Eastern Europe recognized that 'neither the working class, nor its vanguard (the party), nor even the vanguard's vanguard (the "new class") are equipped to manage a modern industrial society efficiently'.²⁴ Neither charismatic leadership nor coercion can effectively substitute for a rational economic mechanism. The regime which sought the fruits of modernisation, therefore, had, in return, to surrender some of its absolute power.

In spite of the challenge presented to the totalitarian model by the advent of bureaucratic and institutional interest groups, many, perhaps even most, commentators retain several of the original totalitarian model components. As Paul M. Johnson points out, what emerged because of the recognition of the role of modernization in changing how we looked at politics in Eastern Europe were models which only redefined the 'really

²² This was later redressed, as one of the first initiatives of the post-Khrushchev leadership was to remove Lysenko from any involvement in the agricultural and biological sciences. Hough and Fainsod, *Soviet Union*, p. 254.

²³ Vladimir V. Kusin, 'Challenge to Normalcy: Political Opposition in Czechoslovakia, 1968-1977', in Rudolf L. Tokes, (ed.), *Opposition in Eastern Europe* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979), p. 26.

²⁴ François Fejtö, *A History of the Peoples Democracies* (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 275.

essential' features of the model, removing the 'contingent' characteristics which were not indispensable to the totalitarian configuration.²⁵

The inadequacy of what Johnson calls 'sub-types' of the totalitarian model is illustrated by the emergence of some ten different ones, none of which were satisfactory enough to earn wide-spread acceptance. Only one such example of these 'sub-types' will be examined here.

Andrzej Korbonski, writing before the developments of the final months of 1989, argues that four of the original six components of the totalitarian model still apply to contemporary Eastern Europe. These are: (1) the leading role of the Communist Party; and its continued monopoly over (2) the instruments of coercion; (3) the media; and (4) the economy.²⁶

How different is Korbonski's model from its totalitarian predecessor? In effect, he argues that not only four, but at least five of the original tenets are still pertinent. When he refers to the Communist Party's control over the means of coercion, it implicitly includes more than characteristic (5) of the Friedrich-Brzezinski model, control over the military, although it is likely de-emphasizing the notion of attribute (3) 'terroristic police control'. The potential for the latter remains, and shall be discussed below.

While Korbonski suggests the Communist Party also retains a monopoly over the economy, he seems to ignore the assertions of the interest group and corporatist models. Possibly he feels that in either of those frameworks, it is the Party that grants autonomy to such entities (as indeed the corporatist model argues), and thus can reclaim it. But in time, these 'independent' economic interests can become animated entities in their own right.

²⁵ Paul M. Johnson, 'Modernization as an Explanation of Political Change in East European States', in Triska and Cocks (eds), p. 30.

²⁶ Korbonski, 'Ideology Disabused', p. 47.

Power and influence evolved out of the hands of the Party, generating sources of competition within the official structures. This development in itself challenged the totalitarian model; and while these changes were acknowledged by many of its sub-types, they too did not portray the development of sources of influence completely outside the Party-State system. It is to these forces to which the discussion now turns.

THE MEANING OF 'OPPOSITION'

The concentration on official structures in the literature on Soviet-types regimes stunted the discipline's ability to assess the formation and significance of what might be called an 'opposition'. The definition of 'opposition' added to this methodological problem. It ranged from simply thinking differently from how the regime intended to assuming an active and organised programme.

Representative of the first position was Werner Volkmer, for whom a dissenter or dissident comprises anyone who simply bears opinions 'critical' of party policy, and he did not specifically state that those views must be expressed.²⁷ Similarly, in 'The Power of the Powerless', Václav Havel, had maintained that opposition begins with 'living within the truth', a conscious rejection of the lie propagated by the state which forces the greengrocer to place perfunctorily a sign among his vegetables reading: 'Workers of the world, unite!'²⁸ For these authors, dissent begins with denying the legitimacy of the ruling ideology.

Occupying a middle position would be Jacques Rupnik, who defined dissent as 'spontaneous, sporadic or continuous manifestations of

²⁷ Werner Volkmer, 'East Germany: Dissenting Views during the Last Decade', in Tökés (ed.), p. 138.

²⁸ Havel, 'Moc bezmocných', pp. 55-133.

dissatisfaction or disagreement with official policies in all spheres of social life'. But he added that dissent must include the actual public expression of discontent.²⁹ Soviet activist Roy Medvedev defined a dissident as a person 'who disagrees in some measure with the ideological, political, economic, or moral foundations that every society rests on'. But, like Rupnik, he defined the dissent by the demonstration of opposition.³⁰

George Schöpflin adds two additional factors to the definition: that the individuals involved be physically organized, and that they apply pressure on the government in pursuit of specific goals.³¹ We have thus gone from a definition of opposition which includes simply the existence of views at odds with the official ideology, to the actual application of pressure by an organized entity on the regime by an organized entity.

An effective distinction of the various nuances of 'discontent' is contained in Sabrina Ramet's *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: The Sources and Meaning of the Great Transformation*.³² She contends that there are three levels of discontent: dissatisfaction, disaffection and dissent. The first manifests itself as malaise over particular issues, such as food prices, but it does not inherently challenge system legitimacy. Disaffection might involve discontent with the system without a corresponding belief in one's capacity to alter it but with possible manifestations of anti-societal behaviour such as the fashionable theft of state property. While entailing potential reprisal against the system,

²⁹ Jacques Rupnik, 'Dissent in Poland, 1968-78: The End of Revisionism and the Rebirth of Civil Society', in Tökés (ed.), p. 61.

³⁰ Cited in Robert Sharlet, 'Varieties of Dissent and Regularities of Repression in the European Communist States: An Overview', in Jane Leftwich Curry (ed.), *Dissent in Eastern Europe* (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 2.

³¹ George Schöpflin, 'Opposition and Paraopposition: Critical Currents in Hungary, 1968-78', in Tökés (ed.), p. 142.

³² Sabrina P. Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe. The Sources and Meaning of the Great Transformation* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991). A second edition has since been published.

disaffection is not synonymous with dissent, the latter possessing the distinct feature of a belief in one's capacity to modify the system, denoting an outside standard against which to assess system performance.

Having considered the definitional facets of opposition, we turn to how the rise of opposition in economics, in culture and in the arts, and by religion challenge the relevant tenets of Korbonski's revised totalitarian model.

As Korbonski notes, the Yugoslav League of Communists created an economic opposition by introducing workers' self-management and abolishing collectivization and all-inclusive central planning.³³ Yugoslavia provided an example of the regime deciding to surrender its absolute monopoly of economic control. More relevant illustrations of workers opposition to economic measures, including those that included the prospect of reform, occurred with Czechoslovakia's New Economic System and Hungary's New Economic Mechanism.³⁴

What developed in the 1980s surpassed even the Action Programme in 1968, which had pledged: 'the right and real possibility of different groups of working people and different social groups to formulate and defend their economic interests in shaping the economic policy'.³⁵

Intellectual and cultural dissidents undermined the totality of the regime's control over the media. The natural result of a strong, vibrant intellectual opposition was the emergence of underground 'media'. This was certainly difficult, and often dangerous, in East European states, such as Romania, where control measures had included the mandatory state registration of every typewriter. *Samizdat* and the Polish *Zepis*, maintained a small but hard-core readership, one that, given the right

³³ Korbonski, 'Ideology Disabused', p. 49.

³⁴ See Alex Pravda, 'Industrial Workers: Patterns of Dissent, Opposition and Accommodation', in Tökés (ed.), esp. p. 216.

³⁵ Action Programme, p. 50, *Blueprint*, p. 172.

circumstances, was instrumental in developing and directing a much larger opposition network. Polish author Ryszard Kapuchinski observed that in Poland underground publications were read in public, such as on trams, by the mid-1980s.³⁶ Even in Party media organs, the press has been manipulated against the government. Examples include the printing on the front page of the Communist Chinese official newspaper *People's Daily* of a speech by a Hungarian official denouncing the use of violence as a means of solving domestic problems. It was published fourteen days before the Tiananmen Square massacre.³⁷

Taking Korbonski's scheme, we see at least two of his characteristics of the totalitarian model were chaffed at by the opposition: Party control of the media and of the economy. Already that represents a challenge to the supremacy of the party.

The supremacy of the Party as the fount of wisdom and inspiration was also undercut by the survival of organized religion throughout Eastern Europe, of which the Polish Roman Catholic Church was probably the most prominent for its successes in usurping Party authority. Referred to as 'hegemonic,' representing eighty per cent of the Polish population, it successfully remained independent of the regime.³⁸ Korbonski argues that the Catholic Church in Poland became so powerful after the release from prison of Primate Stefan Wyszyński, that in effect a 'co-leadership' emerged.³⁹ The importance the Communist regime accorded good relations with the Church was demonstrated by the meeting between General Secretary Gierek and Wyszyński on 29 October 1977, followed by Gierek's audience with the Pope one month later. Before the

³⁶ Comment at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, June 1992.

³⁷ Sheryl WuDunn, 'Boldly and Subtly, China's Press Tests Limits...', *The New York Times*, 24 May 1989.

³⁸ Rupnik, 'Dissent in Poland', p. 86.

³⁹ Korbonski, 'Ideology Disabused', p. 47.

June elections which gave Solidarity its Parliamentary victory, the *Sejm* enacted legislation on 17 May 1989 finally giving legal status to the Roman Catholic Church. This might have been the final concession of the Communist Government to the opposition forces before its own disintegration.⁴⁰

All of the totalitarian-based models, in theoretical terms, are made redundant by the growth of an opposition, although, importantly, dissidents have maintained that totalitarianism in practice is not extinct until each and every of its constituent elements has been removed. As Martin Hybler and Jiří Němec wrote in 'In Search of an Answer', the belief predominated among their fellow Czechoslovak dissidents that 'any fundamental systemic change in totalitarian socialism is impossible; that this system is incapable of permitting any essential change because it would thus endanger its very being'.⁴¹ Czechoslovak dissident Rudolf Battěk stipulated that 'the totalitarian system can only be eliminated by eliminating all the elements of political dictatorship that are essential to that system'.⁴² Such a consideration must be factored into the constructs examining East European politics.

Andrew C. Janos attempts to deal with the many overlapping 'sub-type' models by devising a different set of measurements of the distribution of power. These are:

(1) the 'political formula,' or beliefs concerning the 'fundamental purposes,' or 'ultimate principles,' of the political order; (2) the nature of the governing elites, with particular reference to the imagery they use of sustain their legitimacy; (3) the nature of typical obligations incurred by subordinates (auxiliaries) and non-elites; (4) the political process, or the routinized ways of making binding decisions for the community as a whole; (5) the nature of the restraints imposed on governing elites; (6) politics, or the

⁴⁰ *The Globe and Mail*, 18 May 1989.

⁴¹ Martin Hybler and Jiří Němec, 'In Search of an Answer', in Skilling, *Charter 77*, pp. 324-26, at p. 324.

⁴² Rudolf Battěk, 'Spiritual Values, Independent Initiatives and Politics', in Havel, *Power*, p. 106.

exercise of power in the pursuit of particular preferences; and (7) centralization, or the degree of decisional and leadership autonomy repositied in individual social units.⁴³

Janos's approach provides a scale by which to measure the extent to which regimes retain control over institutional and societal bodies. It still presumes that power does not rest overwhelmingly with the non-regime end of his spectrum. His fourth criterion, especially, shows the fragility of his model. It presupposes that binding decisions can still be made.

As long as oppositional groups remain separate and the regime controls the mechanisms of coercion, it can enforce its decrees. When opposition groups unite, however, the demise of the regime is at hand. It is to these developments that the thesis now turns.

Economic demands have been one of the largest and most vocalised concerns in East Europe. Alex Pravda contends that even though many of the demands of workers in Eastern Europe have political consequence, 'demands of an openly political nature do not figure prominently in workers' protests'.⁴⁴ Such claims, can become political.⁴⁵ For example, workers in East Germany struck over the unavailability of coffee. The regime responded by introducing a coffee substitute, made partly from chicory. The workers again struck, demanding real coffee. The incident grew so serious that fifty workers were arrested on charges with the political crime of scheming on behalf of the class enemy. The protest was viewed seriously by the regime, even though it had no real political motivations.⁴⁶

⁴³ Janos, 'Systemic Models', p. 2.

⁴⁴ Pravda, 'Industrial Workers', p. 226.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Jan S. Prybyla, 'The Great Malaise: Economic Crisis in Eastern Europe', in Kittrie and Volgyes, (eds), p. 72.

⁴⁶ Volkmer, 'East Germany', pp. 119-20. He does not provide dates for the incident.

According to Jacques Rupnik, the opposition groups in Poland, having worked at cross-purposes, finally came together in mutual support. The Catholic Church lent support to the workers' movement. For example, on 26 September 1976, three days after the establishment of the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR), Cardinal Wyszyński proclaimed in a sermon that it is 'painful when workers must struggle for their rights from a workers' government'.⁴⁷ On the following Sunday, all Church collections went to the families of arrested or dismissed workers.⁴⁸ The reciprocal support of the KOR and the workers' movement was demonstrated by the membership of Father Jan Zieja in the former and by the designation of Lech Wałęsa as an honorary monk.⁴⁹

The East German Church proved instrumental in the demonstrations of 1989, but it also had a long history of nourishing various opposition-type groups. These have included efforts to involve alienated German youth in the growing dissent movement, with the parish in Karl-Marx-Stadt inviting rock bands to perform and lead its congregation in singing Christian lyrics to the tune of 'Yellow Submarine'.⁵⁰ The cooperation of different strands of opposition was evident in Czechoslovakia, when Charter 77 spokesman Jiří Hájek explained that three types of people were signatories: intellectuals, ousted reform Communists, and Christians.⁵¹

With a build-up of popular discontent, and the convergence of the organisational structures behind it, the use of force and violence by the state became increasingly ineffective. As Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller

⁴⁷ Cited in Rupnik, 'Dissent in Poland', pp. 89-90.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁴⁹ Sharlet, 'Varieties', pp. 97-8.

⁵⁰ Volkmer, 'East Germany', p. 123.

demonstrate in their work on the Hungarian uprising of 1956, while the movement was militarily crushed and its leaders executed, coercion alone was not sufficient to keep the population in its place; the people 'also *had to be bribed*'.⁵² Even though the regime used force, it had to surrender some control.

There were smaller manifestations of discontent than the large revolts of 1953 and 1956. For example, workers at a large tractor factory outside Warsaw responded to the June 1976 price hikes by destroying the main railroad. On 25 June, when the Party did not respond, they torched the local Communist Party headquarters.⁵³

Such displays of opposition should not occur in an effective totalitarian system. For when socialising instruments like the media and the education system fail to indoctrinate the population, the Party's control over the police and the military remains to suppress symptoms of discontent.

Naturally, few would argue that the East European regimes lacked the capability of physically destroying any popular opposition or uprising. In military terms, the weapons available to a citizenry could not effectively challenge all of the resources at the disposal of the police, and the armed forces of Eastern Europe. But a key factor in a regime's ability to deploy its security and military forces against an internal threat is the political reliability of those forces.⁵⁴ This is a cardinal issue ignored by the totalitarian model. Friedrich and Brzezinski contend that in spite of some problems of attaining full political indoctrination of a regime's military forces, the latter would only become a challenge to the

⁵² Feher and Heller, *Hungary 1956*, p. 146. Emphasis in the original.

⁵³ Rupnik, 'Dissent', pp. 80-1.

⁵⁴ Ivan Volgyes, *The Political Reliability of the Warsaw Pact Armies: The Southern Tier* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1982), p. 6.

regime in the face of 'a major challenge from the outside'.⁵⁵ But once other pillars of the totalitarian system have been weakened, internal forces could undermine the reliability of the security forces, and thereby challenge the leadership by passively refusing to fulfil orders, or actively aiding or even leading a revolt.

In the face of a widespread opposition movement, the army is faced with a crucial question: will soldiers shoot their fellow countrymen? Street demonstrations in the Fall of 1989 in Czechoslovakia, and in East Germany swelled to include as many as one-tenth and one-third, respectively, of the total populations. By contrast, the Chinese protests of April-June 1989 were limited to a few urban areas, and the number of participants rarely exceeded one million, or under 0.1 per cent of the total population.⁵⁶ Naturally, the size of a demonstration is not the only factor in determining the willingness of the instruments of coercion of a regime to crackdown with the required physical force.

Adam Michnik commented that by 1989 in Poland a protest involving as few as 100,000 people (presumably in one location) would make the security forces decline to disperse it.⁵⁷ Indeed, Poland's Military Commander General Wojciech Jaruzelski during the 1976 bread riots declared: 'Polish soldiers will not fire on Polish workers'.⁵⁸ This suggests that the East European Communist regimes had not atomised their societies, and fragmented personal and family loyalties, in the way

⁵⁵ Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship*, p. 281.

⁵⁶ This is not to suggest that urban areas are not key. The Beijing protests were a watershed for Chinese demonstrations, being the first time that intellectuals and workers organized themselves to join students. See Sheryl WuDunn, '150,000 Students, Workers and Intellectuals Raise Their Voices for Change', *The New York Times*, 16 May 1989.

⁵⁷ Adam Michnik, University of Toronto, 24 November 1989. Author's note. Michnik did not elaborate on this point.

⁵⁸ Cited in Ivan Volgyes, *Politics in Eastern Europe* (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1986), p. 94.

that Hannah Arendt, for example, had proposed.⁵⁹ Jaruzelski's declaration did not, of course, mean that the protest, or Solidarity later, were not supported. But the wholesale slaughter of demonstrators did not occur either. Michnik shocked Poles by declaring that he 'understood' Jaruzelski's decision to impose martial law in 1981, explaining that martial law provided recourse for the side in a political conflict that was forced on the defensive, and even 'frightened of losing all control'.⁶⁰

The gradual emergence of separate opposition groups, first as a by-product of the process of modernization, then as more broadly-based societal groups, followed finally by their gradual unification in purpose and in strategy made 'opposition' a permanent player in the politics of Soviet-type regimes.⁶¹ But when the opposition becomes the government, does it retain its plural origins?

In post-Communist Czechoslovakia, decision-making, particularly in foreign policy, became highly exclusive immediately after the revolution and, in principle, remained so. Moreover, the re-emergence of institutional interests, both deterred 'democratic' inputs into foreign policy and forced the Foreign Ministry to redefine or even abandon several of its major policy positions. The chapter now turns to post-communist foreign policy decision-making in Czechoslovakia.

⁵⁹ Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism* (2nd edn) (New York: World Publishing, 1958).

⁶⁰ See William Echikson, 'Facing the Limits of Reform Under Communism', *Christian Science Monitor*, 15-21 June 1989.

⁶¹ Not even East European socialist governments could choose the option proposed by Bertolt Brecht after the crushing of the East German revolution of 17 June 1953:

Would it not be easier
in this case for the government
to dissolve the people
and elect another?

Bertolt Brecht, 'The Solution', *Poems 1913-1956* (1976), p. 440, cited in George Schöpflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993), p. 124.

The argument made in the previous section was that, while still repressive and centralised, communist regimes had become more pluralistic than was previously assessed. The nature of the 1989 revolution suggested that the level of popular participation in politics would remain high.

Part of this reasoning comes from the broad-based nature of the revolution. While certain personalities were crucial, the success of the revolution lay in the convergence of societal pressures, both of people and agencies within and without the official structures. To the extent any ideology underpinned the revolution, it was an ideology that reaffirmed existing values, namely liberal democracy.⁶²

Most East European states attempted the same in practice. Non-Communist activists worked within collective movements which assumed the ubiquitous name of 'Forums', such as that of the Democratic Forum in Hungary, the New Forum in East Germany, and Civic Forum in the Czech Lands. Even in Romania, where revolution was not preceded by a tradition of independent civic initiatives, the transition government sought to project itself as broadly representative by calling itself a Front.

Dissidents who formed the transition government in Czechoslovakia had previously prescribed a highly inclusionary and non-partisan approach to politics.⁶³ When he became President, Havel attempted to implement two related ideas: first, his belief in anti-political politics; and, second, a resumption of the tradition of the First Republic in which President Masaryk remained above party politics. Havel therefore

⁶² Timothy Garton Ash, *We the People: The Revolutions of 1989* (London: Granta, 1990); and Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* (New York: Times Books, 1990), *passim*.

⁶³ See chapter 2.

pronounced himself above all parties and movements, including even Charter 77 and Civic Forum.⁶⁴

Even in democratic societies, foreign policy remains among the most closed forms of decision-making. The leaders of Czechoslovakia's revolution pledged a high degree of pluralism; in foreign policy they spoke of a people's diplomacy. Czechoslovak foreign policy after the revolution contradicted these claims, however, becoming centralised and in many cases indifferent to public pressures. In addition, it became hostage to entrenched institutional interests.

Two general developments account for this phenomenon. The first occurred when agencies within the official structures felt threatened by post-Communist transformation and sought to protect their institutional interests in the face of systemic change. This was true of the intelligence services, the military and the Department of Foreign Trade. The second development, considered in the section below, was the Foreign Ministry's increasing awareness that policies introduced after the revolution were unsustainable when challenged by the realities of politics. Two examples of this were arms sales and nuclear energy. In both cases, the post-Communist government created or maintained governmental agencies that would promote those issue areas, thereby ensuring that they were included in the institutional process. Other political interests sought to institutionalise themselves at the expense of the Federal foreign ministry, thereby undercutting its ability to conduct a unified and coherent policy. This was demonstrated in particular by the establishment of a Slovak Ministry of International Relations to undertake foreign relations for the republic. Finally, the creation of a large Presidential structure had two implications for foreign policy. It ensured that Havel could harness his considerable personal stature and place his personal stamp on foreign

⁶⁴ Bradley, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution*, p. 129.

policy. It also meant that, despite close cooperation between the Presidential Castle and the Foreign Ministry, reinforced by the friendship between Havel and Dienstbier, there were nevertheless occasions when the President acted out of concert with the Ministry.

As will be shown, the widely held view was that the Foreign Ministry dominated foreign policy-making. This section will demonstrate that such an assertion is incorrect. It will also show how the idea of a civic foreign policy was compromised through the decision-making process.

Consensus on Foreign Affairs

The post-Communist Czechoslovak leadership agreed on the general directions of its foreign policy. To the extent that foreign policy was 'made', it was made among a number of people who had known each other well through their years as dissidents. Key people identified with foreign policy were Havel, Dienstbier, Vondra and Dobrovský. Their personal connections made the divergences in actual policy all the more striking. The previous chapter indicated how, even though Czechoslovak dissidents disagreed on many issues, those concerned with foreign affairs agreed on the solutions. The point is reiterated by RFE analyst Jan Obrman: 'it is important to keep in mind that most of those responsible for the formulation of Czechoslovak foreign policy are former dissidents who have known each other and exchanged views on international matters for years. While these former members of the dissident community (today's decision makers) have differing opinions on virtually all domestic issues, they seem to be almost of one mind on international affairs'.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Obrman, 'Foreign Policy: Source, Concepts, Problems', p. 6.

Foreign Ministry Monopoly

The Foreign Ministry was virtually unchallenged in foreign policy-making. In January 1992, towards the end of the period under study, an American scholar observed that no institutions confronted its authority: 'There is no National Security Council such as exists in the USA; no think tanks that could promote alternative policies;...no university institutes or centers for developing independent foreign-policy concepts; and no institutional alternatives elsewhere in the government'.⁶⁶ Where the Foreign Ministry could call upon outside advisers it did not seek to do so. For example, the Ministry had the benefit of the Institute of International Relations, ostensibly an independent foreign policy think tank. The Minister appointed the Director and the Ministry partially funded the Institute. Shortly after the Revolution Dienstbier appointed émigré Czech political scientist Jiří Valenta as Institute Director.

Nevertheless, the Institute was not used as a debating forum for foreign policy.⁶⁷ According to some attached to the Institute, this was partly because Valenta was concerned to use the Institute for personal interests, and partly because Dienstbier did not see the need for a think tank contribution to foreign policy debate.⁶⁸ In addition, at least a part of the Foreign Ministry believed that long-term planning was 'unnecessary' and 'unwise'. Ministry officials claimed that they could not

⁶⁶ James P. McGregor, 'Czechoslovakia: A New Style for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', *RFE/RL Research Report* Vol. 1, No. 3 (17 January 1992), p. 22.

⁶⁷ In 1992, it published accounts of debates with elected officials, but these cannot be taken as evidence of the Institute's direct contribution to the foreign policy process.

⁶⁸ Interviews.

absent themselves from immediate concerns in order to develop long-term plans.⁶⁹

The apparent monopoly on foreign policy exercised by the Ministry was a result of particular circumstances. These included the personality of Foreign Minister Dienstbier; the attacks on potential institutional rivals in the foreign-policy arena as a result of political reorganisation, such as the security and intelligence services and the armed forces; the nature of post-revolutionary politics in which the Parliament's role in foreign policy was minimised through inexperience or political deadlock; and the consensus that existed among senior decision-makers on the overall aims of foreign policy.

While observers contended these circumstances gave the Foreign Ministry control over foreign policy, the Ministry itself was in flux, if not disarray. When Dienstbier took it over on 11 December 1989, it was the first organisation he had ever managed.⁷⁰ He went into what he considered to be a potentially hostile environment, stacked with bureaucrats fearful of change and saturated by the traditions of the old order, aided only by two dissident-colleagues, Jaroslav Šedivý and Dana Huňátová, and shortly thereafter by Dobrovský.⁷¹ Together they undertook to rearrange the structure of the Ministry and to effect substantial personnel changes.

Dienstbier's first objective was to remove anyone who had collaborated with the Communist regime. By this he meant persons who had actively supported the regime, particularly by reporting on fellow workers to the security services. Despite his intentions, he confronted the reverse of the 'red versus expert' dilemma that Communist regimes

⁶⁹ McGregor, 'New Style', p. 26.

⁷⁰ Interview with the author, 13 September 1995.

⁷¹ *Jana Klusáková a Jiří Dienstbier rozmlouvají nadoraz* (Praha: Primus, 1993), p.12

faced when they came to power: the need to find a balance between ideological dependability and bureaucratic experience of running government. Dienstbier invited all Foreign Ministry officials purged after 1968 to return to the diplomatic service. They formed a third category: former Communists, like Dienstbier, who would be considered politically reliable but whose expertise would have gone unused for two decades. One appointee to the Ministry who belonged to this category commented, 'These were the people that Dienstbier liked'.⁷²

Dienstbier recalled many ambassadors,⁷³ and between March and July appointed new ambassadors to principal posts such as West Germany, Austria, Britain, and the UN.⁷⁴ Slovak nationalists attacked him for overrepresenting Czechs in the diplomatic corps. Milan Kňažko, an adviser to Havel for Slovak affairs and later head of Slovakia's Ministry of International Relations, maintained that of Czechoslovakia's ten most important ambassadorial appointments, only one was Slovak.⁷⁵ While Dienstbier insisted that his ambassadorial appointments were made strictly on the basis of professional judgment and the suitability of an individual to a particular country,⁷⁶ Kňažko discounted his argument and referred to the example of Belgium's scheme of parity in such appointments.⁷⁷

Ironically, Dienstbier appointed Slovak Rudolf Schuster as ambassador to Canada (one of the posts cited by Kňažko), on the basis of

⁷² Author's interview with Dr Miloslav Had, Head, Department of Policy and Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1990-92, 30 August 1994 and 12 September 1995.

⁷³ McGregor claims all. 'New Style'.

⁷⁴ *Moravskoslezský den*, 2 August 1990, cited in Jan Obrman, 'Diplomatic Activities at Home and Abroad', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 35 (31 August 1990) 'Diplomatic Activities', p. 14.

⁷⁵ The ten posts included the Group of 7, Belgium for its institutions, China and the Soviet Union. *Lidové noviny*, in JPRS, 15 July 1991, p. 10

⁷⁶ Interview with the author, 13 September 1995.

⁷⁷ *Lidové noviny*, in JPRS, 15 July 1991, p. 10

what the Foreign Minister conceded was 'a political agreement' because it 'was not possible to send only Czech ambassadors'.⁷⁸ Schuster, however, was later recalled on charges of having collaborated with the StB.

Dienstbier acknowledged that he could not effect a full turnover of Ministry staff, opting for what he called a 'gradual approach' to change.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, key positions within the Ministry, such as the heads of all but one Department, had been replaced by the middle of 1990.

Despite problems of reorganisation and personnel changes, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was still seen as commanding the making of foreign policy. This was due in part to political circumstances.

The Absence of Institutional Pluralism

One of the reasons for the apparent lack of institutional interests being expressed in the 'pulling and hauling' of bureaucratic politics is that, since the 1989 revolution, many institutions that could have been expected to assert their own interests have instead had to contend with the core issue of preserving their institutional integrity and existence.

Before turning to the experience of specific Ministries and agencies, it is necessary to examine a process which was part of the post-Communist transformation in Czechoslovakia and which by its nature limited or even paralysed the functioning of several governmental actors.

Lustrace

A post-Communist procedure which affected many institutions in

⁷⁸ Author's interview, 13 September 1995.

⁷⁹ *Wall Street Journal*, 10 May 1990, cited in Obrman, 'Diplomatic Activities', p. 13.

Czechoslovakia was *lustrace*. The term does not translate directly into English but has nevertheless been dubbed 'lustration', derived from Latin meaning sacrificial purification.⁸⁰ It suggests shining light into otherwise unexposed areas and undertaking cleansing.

The lustration law was finally passed by the Federal Parliament in October 1991 after substantial controversy. A commission of 14 MPs was created to remove Communist Party members from higher public office, government bureaucracies, the media, Universities and the police and armed forces for a period of five years. Because of the requirement in Communist systems of Party membership to hold state positions, *lustrace* meant that an overwhelmingly large number of people in such posts were subject to removal. There were rumours that 77 percent of civil servants would be affected, and nearly a third of the Chartists would also be included.⁸¹

Even before the screening process was worked out by the Federal Parliament, it began to claim political careers. One example was Josef Bartončik, leader of the Peoples Party which had formed one of the four parties constituting the ruling Communist-controlled National Front. He was summoned to Havel and told of evidence proving that he had informed for the StB. Despite first agreeing to resign, Bartončik continued as leader of the Peoples Party and as a candidate in the elections. His credibility, however, was greatly reduced and he also suffered heart failure.⁸²

Another high-profile but dubious target of *lustrace* was Jan Kavan who went into exile in Britain after 1968 and was active in the

⁸⁰ *The Financial Times*, 11 November 1991.

⁸¹ Jessica Douglas-Home, 'Vigilant Defence of Liberty', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 3 November 1991.

⁸² For an account in English, see John Lloyd, 'Where are all the Spies?', *The Financial Times*, 10 November 1990.

dissemination of Czech *samizdat* abroad, including Havel's 'Power of the Powerless'. Charges of informing for the Czechoslovak secret police while in exile were brought against him after the Revolution when he was serving as a Federal MP after the November Revolution and suffered a unanimous vote demanding his resignation.⁸³

These examples indicate the arbitrary and sweeping nature of the *lustrace*. The application of *lustrace* to and the general depoliticisation of the intelligence services and the armed forces undercut their ability to function as coherent agencies and to influence foreign policy. But there were other features of post-Communist Czechoslovak polity which contributed to an apparent dominance by the Czernin Palace over foreign policy.

Prime Minister and Parliament: Governmental Bodies Without Interest in Foreign Affairs?

Both the Prime Minister and the Federal Parliament may have been expected to assert themselves in foreign policy matters. The Prime Minister, however, was dedicated to the internal, and especially legal aspects of transition. While he commented on important and controversial issues such as German foreign investment,⁸⁴ all of the interviewees questioned during research for this thesis stressed that Čalfa was not involved in foreign affairs, and some were even surprised that he was interested enough to make such comments.

The Federal Parliament had a Committee on Foreign Affairs to which Dienstbier reported. Far from contesting his policies, Parliament approved

⁸³ For a recent article, see Jonathan Steele, 'When the Saints are Accused of Sinning', *The Guardian*, 2 March 1996.

⁸⁴ See chapter 4.

all the treaties he concluded as Foreign Minister.⁸⁵ By contrast, Parliament debated, contested or even rejected proposals on lustration, the official name of the Federation, and reform of the security services.⁸⁶ If one Federal figure faced resistance in Parliament to his proposals, it was not Dienstbier but President Havel.⁸⁷

Thus there were no significant challenges to the overall nature of foreign policy from the Prime Minister or Parliament .

Political Apathy

A further reason why the Foreign Ministry could dominate policy was popular perceptions of politics generally. In the post-revolutionary period there was a decline in interest in politics. Foreign policy, in particular, was an area which was seen by the public as either abstract or superfluous.

Czechoslovak social scientists suggested that even after the Velvet Revolution, 'many citizens continue[d] to view political affairs as largely the business of government rather than the responsibility of individual citizens'.⁸⁸ After the exceptional 95 percent voter participation in the June 1990 Parliamentary elections, turn out fell in subsequent elections.

Students, who had been crucial to the revolution both for their organisational contributions and for their numbers, largely opted out of politics. Those who remain were often the same people who led the Communist Youth Movement.

⁸⁵ Stanislav Benda and Jan Kulhavý, *Dva roky pro budoucnost* (Praha: Alfa, 1992), p. 27.

⁸⁶ For an example of the latter, see *Lidová demokracie*, 8 November 1990.

⁸⁷ Jan Obrman, 'President Havel's Diminishing Political Influence', *RFE/RL Research Report* Vol. 1, No. 11 (13 March 1992).

⁸⁸ Quotation from Wolchik, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 158. See *ibid.*, for Czechoslovak sources.

A weariness among the population emerged in light of the ineffectiveness of 'democracy' to confront crucial problems, especially the weeding out of old communists. Parliamentary deadlock over apparently trivial issues such as the name of the country caused many to lose faith in democratisation. Havel acknowledged this bluntly in April 1992, writing 'Citizens are becoming more and more clearly disgusted with all this, and their disgust is understandably directed against the democratic government that they themselves have elected'.⁸⁹

Most importantly, political pluralism failed to deliver immediate economic prosperity. The standard of living fell during the life of the post-Communist Federation, and buying power depreciated to less than that of the Great Depression.⁹⁰

A combination of consensus about the direction of foreign policy and a growing indifference to politics generally provided a political backdrop in which the Foreign Minister could formulate and execute policy. The monopoly exercised by the Czernin Palace, however, was aided by changes in other governmental agencies.

CHANGES IN OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The first section of this chapter showed the centrality to the Soviet-type system of security, intelligence and military structures. Not surprisingly, the post-Communist Czechoslovak government undertook to transform the

⁸⁹ Havel, 'Paradise Lost', p. 6. For an account of continued Communist control over the economy and government bureaucracy, see Jiri Pehe, 'The Controversy over Communist Managers', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 36 (7 September 1990), pp. 6-10.

⁹⁰ For a critique of the application of 'shock therapy' to Czechoslovakia, see Jan Adam, 'Transformation to a Market Economy in the Former Czechoslovakia', *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 45, No. 4 (1993), esp. pp. 641ff. For a review of initial support for economic reforms, see Jan Obrman, 'Public Accepts Economic Changes', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 10 (9 March 1990), pp. 21-2.

domestic functioning of those agencies and the means by which their activities were monitored and made accountable. These changes are relevant to explaining how the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry was apparently able to exercise extensive control over foreign-policy decision-making.

Security Services

One of the foremost aims of the post-Communist governments of Central and East Europe was to transform and make accountable the internal and external secret services. The roles of each of these institutions in communist politics in Czechoslovakia, and how changes to those institutions since the 1989 revolutions have modified their role will be considered.

Like most socialist states, and indeed similar to many countries, Czechoslovakia had two secret services, one ostensibly for internal and the other external matters. The internal security service, however, provided more than a domestic function, being a crucial mechanism in the forced cohesion of the Soviet bloc system. The domestic security service, therefore, had significance also for the ability of Czechoslovakia to reassert control over its own foreign policy.

Státní bezpečnost (StB) - State Security

Czechoslovakia differed from other socialist states in that its internal security network, *Státní bezpečnost* (StB), the title of which translated innocuously as State Security, did not produce a head of either the state or the CzCP.⁹¹

⁹¹ Yuri Andropov in the Soviet Union, Erich Honecker in the GDR, Hua Guofeng in the PRC, and Stanislaw Kania in Poland all boasted careers in their country's respective state security agencies before assuming senior posts in the party-state apparatus. Adelman, 'Introduction', in Adelman,

Unlike many of its interwar neighbours, the First Republic did not have a precursor to the StB, which was founded by the coalition government only after the Second World War. The only democratic state in Central Europe throughout the interwar period, the Czechoslovak state deliberately did not construct a secret police. The CzCP, unlike its regional counterparts, was allowed to operate openly and freely, removing much of the impetus for the creation of a secret police.

Once the StB was established, however, it was not under direct Czechoslovak control. Before the Communist 'coup' of February 1948, the StB was under the Ministry of the Interior, one of the portfolios held by the Communists in the postwar coalition government. Even so, the StB was believed to have been beyond the reigns of CzCP General Secretary Gottwald, and therefore probably only responsible to the Soviet Union.⁹²

After 1948, the StB continued to remain largely outside CzCP control: 'Though the Party assumed responsibility for the security apparatus through a new Defense and Security Affairs Committee within the Central Committee, the presence of Soviet advisors and the role of the police in purging the KSC itself meant that the police often was able to exercise any authority over the police. The security apparatus, unlike the Party, was a group on which Cominform and the U.S.S.R. could count'. Rather than controlling the StB, the CzCP found itself monitored by that organ. Secret police agents were inserted in CzCP cells in work places and throughout the military, including in the basic unit. After the February coup, the budget of the Ministry of the Interior was calculated

(ed.), *Terror*, p. 2.

⁹² Condoleezza Rice, 'Czechoslovakian Secret Police', in Adelman (ed.), *Terror*, p. 159, citing Jiri Pelikan, *The Czechoslovak Political Trials* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971).

to surpass by one billion dollars the eleven percent share of the national budget allocated to the military.⁹³

The attack by the Action Programme on the impunity of the secret police, as well as its tradition of loyalty to Moscow before Prague, supports speculation that the secret police would have had motive to aid the WTO intervention.⁹⁴ The secret police were certainly responsible for the arrest of the leaders of the Prague Spring.⁹⁵

Because of the power of the security services, made all the more pertinent by the personal experiences of the dissidents, the post-Communist Czechoslovak government sought to overhaul its structure and accountability. When Havel travelled to Moscow in February 1990, one of his demands was the cessation of cooperation between Czechoslovak secret services and the KGB.

While the StB as an organ was neutered, prosecution of its functionaries began slowly. By March of 1990, 1,900 StB officers had been investigated for their activities under the Communist regime, but only eighty had been dismissed.⁹⁶ In September 1990, former dissident and Deputy Interior Minister Jiří Ruml expressed concern over the continuing activities of secret police agents, stating that a possible 140,000 collaborators were continuing to work against society.⁹⁷

Despite fears of the residual power of the security services, their connections to the Soviet Union were clearly cut and efforts were made to divide the agencies and make them publicly accountable. Interior Minister

⁹³ Rice, in Adelman, (ed.), p. 163, 164 and p. 165, the latter citing *The New York Times*, 6 January 1953.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 169, citing Karel Kaplan, 'The Secret Prague', *Panorama*, 11 July 1978.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*; and Adelman, in *ibid.*, 'Conclusions', p. 277.

⁹⁶ *The Independent*, 24 March 1990.

⁹⁷ *Le Monde*, 12 January 1991.

Langoš pledged that since the disbandment of the State Security, intelligence monitoring equipment was not being used. Phone tapping could only be undertaken after appropriate legal procedures were fulfilled.⁹⁸

Measures were also taken to restructure and redistribute the authority of the secret services. A particular effort was to create a Czechoslovak equivalent of the FBI to be called the Federal Service for the Protection of the Constitution and Democracy. Only after suitable means of democratic accountability were in place (which Parliament did not find sufficient) was the agency to be allowed to engage in international contacts.⁹⁹ Functions such as counterintelligence, previously in the remit of the secret police, were reassigned to the Defence Ministry. The Head of Military Counterintelligence Pavol Gavlas, explained that it would no longer be used for in internal spying, that contacts between the existing Military Counterintelligence and the StB had been severed and that its staff was being reduced both through political screening and reorganisation.¹⁰⁰

Institutional reorganisation of the domestic security services diminished their autonomy and their ability to influence the orientation of Czechoslovakia's foreign policy. They would certainly no longer be the agents of a foreign power.

⁹⁸ Prague Domestic Service, 27 November 1990, in *FBIS*, 30 November 1990, p. 25.

⁹⁹ See comments Jiří Muller, Director of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, *Lidové noviny*, 10 November 1990.

¹⁰⁰ *Svobodné slovo*, 12 July 1990.

Deputy Defense Minister Antonín Rašek explained in November 1990 that the activities of Military Counterintelligence had stopped and that its staff would be reduced to one-fifth of its current size. Prague Domestic Service, 28 November 1990, in *FBIS*, 29 November 1990, p. 21.

External Intelligence Services

The new Czechoslovak government undertook to reform both the composition and role of the external wing of its intelligence agency, renamed the Federal Information Service. It worked with MI6, the CIA, as well as Italian, Austrian and possibly Israeli agencies to remove Czechoslovak operatives planted abroad, and received training for Havel's bodyguards, and in combatting terrorism and drug smuggling.¹⁰¹

Traditional spying abroad by Czechoslovak intelligence services was pledged to be terminated by the post-Communist government, but not before the embarrassment caused by the expulsion of two Czechoslovak diplomats from the Netherlands for attempting to procure Western military secrets and classified material on the Bush-Gorbachev summit meeting in Malta in December 1990.¹⁰² Deputy Foreign Minister Dobrovský said in July 1990 that Czechoslovak embassies had been cleaned of spies since 30 June of the same year.¹⁰³

Understandably, the Czechoslovak Government was cautious about the role of its intelligence agency abroad. On 10 April 1991 Federal Interior Minister Langos referred to comments on 29 March by his spokesman Martin Fendrych that Langoš had made 'a sort of gentleman's agreement' with several Western intelligence agencies. The Minister pronounced that the ČSFR 'does not and will not conclude any more written agreements on cooperation with other intelligence services', and

¹⁰¹ *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 June 1990. The exact nature of these links were not revealed, and will likely remain elusive.

¹⁰² *International Herald Tribune*, 17 July 1990. Czechoslovak agents apparently attempted to obtain information from NATO. *International Herald Tribune*, 20 July 1990.

¹⁰³ *International Herald Tribune*, 20 July 1990.

promised that 'the Czechoslovak intelligence service will not operate on the territory of another state with the aim of harming its interests'.¹⁰⁴

The Secret Service's most consequential act since December 1989 was the submission to Havel of a report delineating a covert German masterplan to affect the political domination of the Czech lands through economic imperialism. Rather than being a report from the Service as a whole, however, it was produced by a single officer and the Interior Ministry labelled the report unfounded.¹⁰⁵

In spite of the lack of abundant and frank information on its duties, the foreign intelligence service was not considered to have an overwhelming impact on foreign policy making.

The Armed Forces

The Military never enjoyed a prominent role in Czechoslovak life. While the Czechoslovak Legion distinguished itself in the Great War, the Army was ordered to its barracks by Beneš during Munich and the Communist takeover and by Dubček during the 1968 intervention.

None of the CzCP General Secretaries or Czechoslovak heads of state had made their careers in the armed forces, and the Army has never been seen as a rival to the government, as occurred in Poland in the early 1980s.

While the Military may have posed no real threat to Czechoslovakia's post-Communist democracy, its leadership wanted to ensure that Armed Forces would be loyal to it. It was only in their transformation that the Armed Forces could be said to have had any role in politics.

¹⁰⁴ ČTK, 10 April 1991, in *FBIS*, 15 April 1991, p. 15.

¹⁰⁵ *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 February-5 March 1992.

The limitations on the Czechoslovak military to exert institutional interests in post-Communist political life can be deduced from its inability to resist the assault on its ranks caused by democratisation. Less than a year after the revolution, 9,380 professional soldiers, of whom nearly five thousand were officers and seventy-four generals, left the military. Three-quarters of these had voluntarily resigned or refused to swear allegiance to the new Government.¹⁰⁶ Any prestige enjoyed by the Army under Communism ebbed as military parades were minimised and military training in schools annulled. The Army, eighty-five percent of the officers of which were CzCP members, was being depoliticised.¹⁰⁷ A 15 March 1990 decree banned membership in political parties while in military service, a measure which was stricter than in most other countries.¹⁰⁸ Officers who remained in the Armed Forces probably disliked this decree. A survey conducted in autumn 1990 found that almost half of Czechoslovakia's Army officers considered democratisation had resulted in chaos within army units'.¹⁰⁹

Political changes in the Armed Forces extended to Defence Minister Miroslav Vacek. Originally hailed as the Communist who went over to the people, and lauded by Havel for 'controlling the military and not letting it be used against the people' during the Velvet Revolution,¹¹⁰ he was dismissed after the belated discovery of his role in preparations for

¹⁰⁶ *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 1990.

¹⁰⁷ Jan Obrman, 'The Czechoslovak Armed Forces: The Reform Continues', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 6 (7 February 1992), p. 48.

¹⁰⁸ *Report on Eastern Europe* (6 April 1990), p. 12.

¹⁰⁹ Radio Czechoslovakia, 25 October 1990, cited in Jan Obrman, 'Civilian Appointed New Defense Minister', (9 November 1990), p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Radio Czechoslovakia, 17 October 1990, cited in *ibid.*, p. 2.

repression of the Velvet Revolution.¹¹¹ His successor, Luboš Dobrovský, became the first civilian head of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces since before the Second World War.¹¹² It was only with the appointment of a former dissident that the Armed Forces were seen to have taken up more of a role in broader aspects of foreign policy.¹¹³

While the military never occupied a pivotal role in policy formation in Czechoslovak politics regardless of type of government, its role after the revolution seems tightly limited.

One of the roles of the military in the Communist era was, it is claimed, to train both soldiers of allied socialist countries and also to provide subversive training. The post-Communist government sought to halt the use of its military facilities for such purposes. The Defence Minister revealed in Parliament that some 250 students from socialist Czechoslovakia's allies such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Laos, Libya, and Vietnam were studying at the Military Academy in Brno, and 80 Iraqi students were suspended. A further 45 students were at the Military Air Force Academy in Košice. The Minister said that contracts for providing such education in the future would be made on the basis of their 'economic and political usefulness for our republic'.¹¹⁴

While the military underwent substantial changes in the way it operated, the new government also found new ways of using it to fulfil foreign policy goals. For example, it contributed a chemical weapons unit to Operation Desert Shield, and was one of the few national forces to enter Iraqi territory. But it was clear that the Armed Forces would

¹¹¹ For Vacek's relation to plans to crush the revolution, see *ibid.*, pp. 2 and 4. Vacek provides a defence in his *Proč bych měl mlčet...* (Praha: Nadas, 1991).

¹¹² Cepicka was made a General before he assumed the post in 1950.

¹¹³ Interviews with Had.

¹¹⁴ Prague Domestic Service, 27 November 1990, in *FBIS*, 30 November 1990, p. 25.

continue in the Czechoslovak tradition of being servants of the political process, rather than being intrusive in it.

With the changes to the intelligence services and military resulting from democratisation, the Foreign Ministry could be assured that any potential rivalry in foreign policy-making would be minimal. In view of the foreign policy consensus and the disinterest in that area shown by Parliament and the Prime Minister, there are strong reasons for agreeing with assessments that the Foreign Office held a 'monopoly' on foreign policy.

Nevertheless, it had to revise and even contradict its own policies in the face of interests which were expressed by or through governmental structures. In analytical terms, the Foreign Ministry had a proverbial best case scenario to exercise full control over foreign policy, but it proved unable to do so.

The following section examines how those interests arose and what impacts they had on a consistent and coherent federal foreign policy.

INSTITUTIONAL INTERESTS REVISITED

Arms Sales

Arms production was a central feature of Czechoslovakia's advanced industrial economy. Between the two World Wars, the country was the principal manufacturer of weapons in Central Europe 'and with the interwar restrictions on German rearmament, Czechoslovakia became a center of production for all Europe'.¹¹⁵ The tradition of arms production continued after the February coup and Czechoslovakia became

¹¹⁵ Rice, *Soviet Union*, p. 49.

the world's largest per capita arms exporter and came to account for 47 percent of Czechoslovakia's total exports.¹¹⁶

After the Velvet Revolution, Dienstbier was adamant that arms sales would stop, a position reiterated by Federal Deputy Prime Minister Josef Hromadka.¹¹⁷ Yet the sales continued, to the embarrassment of the Foreign Ministry. At three of four addresses given by Czechoslovak representatives of the Foreign Ministry, they were asked aggressively whether arms sales had stopped and why the decision had been taken, in particular, to arm Syria, and, later, Peru. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Egon Lansky acknowledged that the arms sales were 'bad business'.¹¹⁸

Further embarrassment must have been caused when a German-registered ship carrying T-72s to Syria was stopped exactly on the day that the CSCE Summit was convening in Prague. Čalfa said the timing was 'peculiar', not least because the ship had already left Germany three weeks before.¹¹⁹

Despite the Foreign Ministry's intentions, it was faced with pressure from arms-producing constituencies, especially in Slovakia, and the fact of export licenses being granted by the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Ultimately, both Havel and Dienstbier conceded that the export of weapons could not be stopped.

Nuclear Power

The post-Communist leadership was forced to reverse on another policy issue: that of nuclear energy. As dissidents, they had never been

¹¹⁶ *Guardian*, 5 January 1991.

¹¹⁷ *International Herald Tribune*, 25 January 1990; and *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 February 1990.

¹¹⁸ *Lidové noviny*, 8 February 1992.

¹¹⁹ ČSTK 31 January 1992, in *FBIS*, 3 February 1992, p. 14.

outright opposed to nuclear energy but, as Havel told Austrian television: 'I am not an outspoken advocate of nuclear energy'.¹²⁰ The twenty-second of Charter 77's numbered documents, issued on 27 November 1978, addressed the safety of the country's nuclear power stations. The Charter 77 spokesmen, one of whom was Havel, noted that such documents need not have reflected either their own opinions or a preponderance of signatories. Nevertheless, the document focused particularly on Jaslovské Bohunice which had experienced accidents in January 1976 and February 1977, and called upon the government to inform the public on the safety of nuclear power stations and to provide specialists with necessary information facilitating proper management.¹²¹

The Government of Marian Čalfa, himself not a dissident, initially favoured the discontinuation of nuclear energy.¹²² But that policy had to be abandoned in the face of several considerations: preserving autonomy against Austrian interference; lack of alternative energy supplies; the interlinkage of energy lines in the country; possibilities of energy sales to the West; and the emergence of bureaucratic politics.

Austria was eager to force Czechoslovakia to close down the Bohunice nuclear power station, in Western Slovakia near Vienna, which has two VVER-440 reactors, of the Soviet type installed in the now-closed Kozlodui reactor in Bulgaria. In addition to Austrian Environment Minister Marilies Flemming calling Bohunice a 'Chernobyl at Vienna's gates',¹²³ and numerous meetings with Federal and Slovak officials, the Austrian government undertook 'scare-tactics', such as the distribution of potassium iodide tablets (which replace potassium iodide absorbed by

¹²⁰ Austrian TV, 5 May 1991, in SWB, 9 May 1991.

¹²¹ This paragraph is drawn directly from Skilling, *Charter 77*, p. 92.

¹²² *The Financial Times*, 9 May 1991.

¹²³ Cited in, for example, Ian Traynor, 'Havel Visit Breaks Waldheim "Boycott"', *The Guardian*, 27 July 1990.

thyroid, brought about by radiation), to children, pregnant women and nursing mothers. On 13 December 1990, Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky demanded the closure of Bohunice following the publication of a report by international experts on the potential risks posed by the installation.¹²⁴

Czechoslovak officials objected to Austria's multifarious efforts to force Bohunice's termination. On 20 July 1990, the Czechoslovak government presented communicated its 'concern over a "new anti-Czechoslovak campaign in Austria"'.¹²⁵ Half a year later, Čalfa found the Austrian behaviour so unbecoming that he told the Austrian daily *Die Presse* 'This campaign has already reached the limits of decency'. He added, 'Please trust us to be responsible enough to immediately shut down the plant if human life is in danger'.¹²⁶ The Western press viewed Austria as attempting 'to cajole' Czechoslovakia into shutting down the Bohunice reactors.¹²⁷

As an incentive, Austria offered free electricity to Czechoslovakia, at estimated cost of \$330 million per year.¹²⁸ But Czechoslovakia lacked sufficient power lines to carry the electricity, even if it were to have agreed to the proposal.¹²⁹

Alternatives to nuclear energy were either financially costly or environmentally detrimental; nuclear energy, with the eventual installation of Western-standard (and likely Western-made) safety devices, was advocated by the Government as the only energy alternative. Čalfa told

¹²⁴ Prague Domestic Service, 13 December 1990, in *FBIS*, p. 35.

¹²⁵ Peter Martin, 'Tough Choice Faced on Nuclear Power', *Report on Eastern Europe*, 24 August 1990, pp. 10-11.

¹²⁶ *The Independent*, 30 January 1991.

¹²⁷ *The Economist*, 27 July 1991.

¹²⁸ *The Independent*, 28 January 1991.

¹²⁹ *The Economist*, 27 July 1991.

the Austrian ambassador to Czechoslovakia that the country was forced to rely on nuclear power because of the ecological and medical risks posed by lignite and that already Czechoslovakia relied on nuclear power for a quarter of its energy.¹³⁰ (This figure did not include the use of several planned, and partially-completed reactors, which would have increased Czechoslovakia's dependency on nuclear power). Even Havel conceded that nuclear power had to remain. When he travelled to Salzburg for his controversial meeting with Austrian Chancellor Waldheim, he replied to protests that his country currently could not stop using nuclear energy. In May 1991 he conceded that 'we will not be able to do without nuclear energy for a long time to come'.¹³¹

Additional incentives for Czechoslovakia to retain and expand the production of nuclear energy resulted from Soviet reductions in the supply of oil.¹³² Because of a 30 percent reduction in Soviet oil supply (and the decision to close several mines for environmental reasons), the Czechoslovakia proceeded with nuclear power as 'the cleanest and cheapest solution for the future'.¹³³

There appears to have been a further reason for the maintenance of nuclear energy: the emergence of a distinct economic interest on the part of the Czechoslovak Government emerged. Other than Čalfa, the Czech Republic's Minister of the Environment Bedřich Moldan was the only government official to oppose nuclear energy. His opposition was curtailed when he was forced to resign as one of the first victims of the screening process.

¹³⁰ ČTK, 14 December 1990, in *FBIS*, 17 December 1990, p. 34.

¹³¹ For Havel's meeting with Waldheim, see chapter 4. Prague Radio, 24 July 1990, in *SWB*, 26 July 1990; and Austrian TV, 5 May 1991, in *SWB*, 9 May 1991.

¹³² See chapter 5.

¹³³ *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 July 1990.

Since early 1991, Czechoslovakia sought to export energy to Western Europe. A March 1991 agreement to supply Munich's utility Bayernwerk with 1,400 megawatts of electricity from the Mochovce nuclear power plant under construction in Western Slovakia illustrated this goal.¹³⁴ The Federal Government institutionalized this interest by placing the export of electricity under the portfolio of the Deputy Economics Minister for Fuel and Energy.¹³⁵

The creation of a governmental office with a mandate to sell energy abroad for desperately-needed hard currency may have laid the foundations for a bureaucratic-political input into decision-making, one which could challenge and even contradict the Federal and Republic Environment ministries, which had consistently advocated an end to nuclear energy production.

Slovak National Aspirations and Foreign Policy

In a May 1991 interview Havel reiterated that all the major political groups in Slovakia upheld the federation, and that they 'all acknowledge that foreign policy, currency, and defence are federative tasks'.¹³⁶ The law of December 1990 which delineated the division of powers between the federal and republic levels of government, however, permitted both levels to undertake activities in the international arena with the proviso that the Federal Government be apprised of the Republic level's activities.¹³⁷

In early September 1990, the Slovak Ministry for International Relations was established. Its first head, Milan Kňažko, symbolised the

¹³⁴ *The Financial Times*, 16 March 1992.

¹³⁵ *The Financial Times*, 9 May 1991.

¹³⁶ Austrian TV, 5 May 1991, in SWB, 9 May 1991.

¹³⁷ See Wolchik, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 74.

significance of the Ministry itself. Fluent in French, a famous actor, and a founder of Public Against Violence, Kňažko had been Havel's principle adviser on Slovak issues after the revolution. He represented a defection from the country's centre in Prague to the republic level.¹³⁸

The Ministry's initiatives might have seemed rather limited in scope and result. Russian and Ukrainian Foreign Ministers Andrei Kozyrev and Anatoli Zlenko met Kňažko in Bratislava.¹³⁹ This may have been a low-level meeting, but the Foreign Ministers of the Soviet republics might also have been seeking to engage in 'foreign policy'.

Kňažko's successor Pavol Demes, accompanied Havel on his second visit to Washington in October 1991, and attended the dinner at the White House. Demes also travelled to Warsaw in January 1992, where he met with various Polish officials.¹⁴⁰

The Slovak Ministry for International Relations was not necessarily an institutional expression of nationalism or a desire for national self-determination. Roman Zelaný, another organizer of VPN, maintained that the new Ministry did not aim to supersede the federal Foreign Ministry, but to cultivate 'economic and cultural relations with other states'.¹⁴¹ The Ministry might actually have deflated some of the more extreme manifestations of Slovak nationalism. When some thirty Federal Slovak MPs began a petition demanding UN observers to monitor the political situation in the republic, for example, the Ministry called the demand excessive and counterproductive.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ *The Times*, 18 September 1990.

¹³⁹ Prague Domestic Service, 28 November 1990, in *FBIS*, 29 November 1990.

¹⁴⁰ PAP and CSTK in SWB, 24 January 1992.

¹⁴¹ *The Times*, 18 September 1990.

¹⁴² *Report on Eastern Europe*, 6 December 1991, p. 35.

Regardless, such meetings show that Slovakia was attempting to engage in foreign relations of its own. Certainly, those who observed or had to deal with the Slovak Ministry held a different view of its intentions, and, indeed, of its consequences. Slovak dissident and leading human rights lawyer Miroslav Kusý maintains that the Ministry unambiguously sought to undermine federal foreign policy. Miloslav Had, Head of Policy and Planning in the Federal Ministry, was equally categorical that the Ministry undermined national foreign policy.¹⁴³

Government Economic Ministries and Foreign Policy

Havel was not directly concerned with money. He often emphasised that his country wanted to learn from others and that Czechoslovaks did not expect condescending economic handouts.¹⁴⁴ Rather, he was the intellectual architect of a foreign policy vision which included, not least the reformulation of Europe's security architecture.

His detachment from financial issues was compensated for by the Finance Minister, Václav Klaus. Their visit to Switzerland serves to illustrate their different priorities and approaches. Klaus met with the Swiss Minister of the Economy and the heads of key banks and Havel commented, 'The prospects in this field seem to be hopeful'. Characteristically, however, he added, 'Of course, the main or only aim of the visit was not to borrow money.'¹⁴⁵

Depending on one's point of view, either an effective division of labour occurred, or a competition arose between the 'political wing' of foreign policy and the economic. But as an unambiguous free-marketeer,

¹⁴³ Interviews.

¹⁴⁴ See the section on the US in chapter 7.

¹⁴⁵ Prague Television Service, 23 November 1990, in *FBIS*, 29 November 1990.

Klaus had set a clear economic foreign policy which clashed with the more idealistic programmes advanced by the Foreign Ministry.

This was visible in three large policy areas. The first was in relations with former socialist states. While most members of Havel's government were actually intent on retaining the Warsaw Pact and using it in the transformation of European security, Klaus was forthright in demanding the dismantling of COMECON and of moving to strictly dollar-exchanges between its members. While Dienstbier did not object to that particular policy, but it showed that the Finance Ministry set clear plans for relations with the rest of the former socialist bloc.

Relatedly, the second clash concerned regional cooperation, particularly the Visegrád group. While Havel and Dienstbier extolled the value of that cooperation and were probably inspired by the possibility of enacting a Central European supranational identity, Klaus argued that such cooperation hindered Czechoslovakia's domestic economic transformation and its chances of early entry into the EC. At times, the Hradčany refuted Klaus's comments. Klaus's comments that Czechoslovakia had limited interest in Visegrád cooperation and that in fact it could delay the country's entry into the EC were countered by the Hradčany. For example, in July 1991 a Presidential spokesman qualified Klaus's comments by saying that economists look at both cooperative and competitive issues and then reiterated Havel's interest 'in close cooperation' with the two countries in all aspects of political, social and economic life, and in the pursuit of membership of European bodies.¹⁴⁶

The third disagreement arose from Dienstbier's so-called Harvard Plan. This envisaged having Western governments funding the Soviet Union to enable it to buy Central European goods. Klaus attacked the

¹⁴⁶ *Mlada Fronta Dnes*, 8 July 1991.

programme as non-sensical. Dienstbier saw it as an excuse for an attack on him personally and on his political party, which rivalled Klaus's.¹⁴⁷

The challenges to the Foreign Ministry's mandate for external policy were not limited to the Finance Ministry but also came from the Ministry of Foreign Trade. A company under its control was responsible for issuing the exit licenses for the T-72 tanks which caused the Foreign Ministry substantial embarrassment.

The economic, nationalistic and political implications of curtailing arms exports and the production of nuclear power were examples of how the Foreign Ministry's foreign policy was derailed. But there were other challenges to the dominance of the Czernin Palace in foreign policy. One challenge emerged from the restructured Presidential Office, and thus, ironically, from Dienstbier's close friend, President Havel.

Personality and the Bureaucratic Presidency

Czechoslovak politics in the interwar period was characterised by the omniscient, grandfatherly image of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. His successor Eduard Beneš, President from Masaryk's death in 1937 to the Communist coup in 1948, while less charismatic, continued the tradition that the Presidency derived its influence not so much from the constitution as from respect for the President himself. This condition of political deference was recreated under Havel.

Ten months into the post-communist period, *Le Monde* wrote that Havel appeared to be the only solid centre of power in the country.¹⁴⁸ In November 1991, in spite of the continuing economic hardships

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Dienstbier.

¹⁴⁸ *Le Monde*, 13 September 1990.

experienced by the Czechoslovak population, Havel had a seventy-one percent approval rating nation-wide, which grew to eight-two percent in February 1992.¹⁴⁹

Havel did not rely on tradition or popularity to implement Presidential initiatives. In fact, his constitutional powers were highly limited, but he tried to enhance his executive abilities, if not also power, immediately upon taking up residence in the Presidential Castle.

The day he was elected President, Havel began to reorganise the Office of the Presidency, appointing close friends as advisers.¹⁵⁰ On 18 January 1990, he established yet another advisory group named the Collegium of the President. Later that month, he appointed the expelled heir to the Bohemian crown, Prince Karl Johannes von Scharzenberg, to lead an advisory group composed of exiled émigrés. In February, that body was expanded when Havel added leading émigrés Miloš Forman, Pavel Kohout, Nicholas Lobkowitz, Jiří Pelikan, Jacques Rupnik, Ota Sik, Josef Škvorecký and Pavel Tigrid. Havel told the Federal Assembly six months later, on 29 June 1990, that the Office of the President needed to be a 'real political office'.¹⁵¹ On 11 July, the Office was further enlarged, to eight political sections overseeing domestic policy, foreign policy, social policy, cultural policy, economic policy, human rights, legal policy, and the press and information. Each section was then divided into numerous departments. To manage the burgeoning Presidential edifice, Schwarzenberg was made Chancellor of the Office of the President.

Former dissident Rudolf Zukal questioned Havel's assumption of some many duties and the risks posed thereby to existing constitutional

¹⁴⁹ *Narodná obroda*, 28 November 1991, and CSTK, 6 February 1992, cited in Obrman, 'Havel's Diminishing Political Influence', p. 18.

¹⁵⁰ Jiri Pehe, 'Office of the President Reorganized', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 31 (3 August 1990), p. 5.

¹⁵¹ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 5.

organs.¹⁵² As a Radio Free Europe report concluded, 'The sheer size of the Office of the President, with its hundreds of employees, is...likely to lead to the creation of what Havel says he does not want: a shadow cabinet or a center of executive power competing with the government'.¹⁵³

It is unrealistic to suggest that Havel should not have appointed his own advisers, not least when they ranked among the world's most talented artists. It is also natural to suggest that in a time of political change, when, as Dienstbier found in the Foreign Ministry, Havel entered circumstances in which he knew no one, that he would want chosen people around him.

The result, however, was a bloated administrative structure unaccountable to anyone. Doubtless Havel had no malicious designs, even though his critics accused him of seeking to undermine other bases of authority, especially Parliament. The effect on foreign policy was that the Presidential Office engaged in two of the most controversial and potentially embarrassing acts of post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy. The first was an invitation to the Dalai Lama, which provoked an outcry from China and the cancellation of major trade agreements (which in the end were largely rectified). The second was Havel's consent to meet Austrian Chancellor Kurt Waldheim, isolated by the international community for his wartime service in Yugoslavia. The meeting was attributed to Schwarzenberg.¹⁵⁴ In neither case was the Foreign Ministry consulted or aware of the initiative, even though relations between the Castle and Czernin Palace were deemed extremely close.

¹⁵² *Lidové noviny*, 9 July 1990.

¹⁵³ Pehe, 'Office of the President', p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ See chapter 4 for details of the meeting. For Schwarzenberg's hand in the affair, see Anne McElvoy, 'Fairytale Prince Awakens Sleeping Heritage', *The Times*, 31 October 1990. Officials asked about the responsibility for the meeting would not confirm or deny Schwarzenberg's role.

The bureaucratic edifice erected around the Presidential Office not only constructed a possible rival to the Foreign Ministry, it also gave Havel greater institutional means to express his own views on foreign policy.

Foreign policy presented the best opportunity for the post-Communist leadership to eliminate the influence on policy of entrenched bureaucratic interests. Most practitioners and observers suggest that the Foreign Ministry enjoyed a monopoly over foreign policy and consensus existed among post-Communist leaders on at least the general content and direction of foreign policy. This view, however, is mistaken.

Perhaps for reasons particular to the transition, institutions and offices which might have been expected to engage in foreign policy (irrespective of whether in conjunction with the Foreign Ministry or at crosspurposes to it) had truncated roles in foreign policy making. The Prime Minister and Parliament, however, were universally seen as remaining outside of foreign policy.

In addition, the personalities behind post-Communist foreign policy decided to work with one another, having debated politics in dissent for two decades. Thus, a best-case scenario for the management of foreign policy by the Ministry could be said to have existed.

The bureaucratic-political explanation for foreign policy decisions advanced by Graham Allison was contextualised in terms of three models. The first constituted a rational actor model while the hybrid of the second and third models, organisational behaviour and bureaucratic

politics, studied foreign policy as the result of the exercise of institutional interests within a common governmental structure.¹⁵⁵

The treatment of the models as discreet entities was subsequently challenged, and Lawrence Freedman made the modification of placing them at opposite ends of a continuum.¹⁵⁶ Each of the entrenched interests examined here could be said to have served an aspect of Czechoslovak national interest. Nevertheless, in many cases, foreign policy as expressed by the Foreign Ministry was contradicted in practice by the actions of others.

If the rational actor model can be placed at one end of a continuum and the bureaucratic politics model at the other, the continuum could be said to represent individual influence at one end and institutional interests at the other.

If such a continuum is applied to post-Communist Czechoslovakia, its foreign policy decision-making can be seen as having been dominated initially by personalities, particularly Havel and Dienstbier. However, the government found that it had to accept structural limitations which forced changes in policy. These included recognition of economic problems and Slovak nationalism as they related to the need to resume arms sales. This also accounts for the government's need not only to defend the use of nuclear energy but to create governmental agencies to sell power abroad. These policy areas not only forced changes in policy but resulted in the

¹⁵⁵ Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co., 1971). Reference to Allison's model of bureaucratic politics does not presume its suitability to other political systems. See, for example, William Wallace, 'Old States and New Circumstances: The International Predicament of Britain, France and Germany', in William Wallace and William Paterson (eds), *Foreign Policy Making in Western Europe* (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1978), pp. 31-55.

¹⁵⁶ Lawrence Freedman, 'Logic, Politics and Foreign Policy Processes: A Critique of the Bureaucratic Politics Model', *International Affairs* Vol. 52, No. 3 (July 1976), pp. 434-49.

deliberate creation or enhancement of bureaucratic structures to advance these interests.

The democratic ideals of the Czechoslovak dissidents and the expansive societal participation in the Velvet Revolution suggested that post-Communist foreign policy should have been an expression of popular will. Instead, it became a reflection of institutional interests.

People in socialist Eastern Europe joked that socialism was the longest road from capitalism to capitalism. It might also now be said that 'democracy', as represented by the revolution in Czechoslovakia, became the shortest route between bureaucratic politics and bureaucratic politics.

CHAPTER 4:
GEOPOLITICS DISCOUNTED AND MORALITY CHAMPIONED:
CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S RELATIONS WITH GERMANY

The civic thinking constituting post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy was clearly demonstrated in its relations with Germany. Havel rejected the idea that the German-speaking lands surrounding Czechoslovakia would resume their historical leverage over Czech political life; he also believed that Czechoslovak-Germans relations could not recommence without the Czechoslovaks apologising to the Germans for historical wrongs.

The chapter begins by putting post-communist Czechoslovak-German Relations into an historical context. It then considers Havel's dismissal of geopolitical implications of German unification. His position illustrated the achievement of a major Czechoslovak dissident initiative, the Prague Appeal of 1985 which called for the elimination of the division of Europe by eliminating the division of Germany. Havel's policy on German unification also demonstrated the relative selflessness of Czechoslovak foreign policy, in view of the avoidable consequences unification had on the country.

The moral content of Czechoslovakia's civic foreign policy is then examined in the cases of Havel's apology for the postwar expulsion of the Sudeten Germans and his refusal to maintain the international marginalization of Austrian Chancellor Kurt Waldheim.

The last section considers the challenges and contradictions posed to Czechoslovak foreign policy by the trade and cultural practices that resulted from large German investment in Czechoslovakia. The chapter concludes with an assessment of how some of the selfless civic qualities

in Havel's policy towards Germany harmed Czechoslovak interests, while others aspects can be seen to have served national interests.

CZECH AND CZECHOSLOVAK-GERMAN RELATIONS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Czech history has been profoundly influenced by the relationship between the Czechs and the Germans, to the extent that the Germans have been the 'constituting other' of the Czechs before 1918 of the Czechs, and of the Czechoslovaks thereafter. It is therefore necessary to offer at least a cursory account of the German influence on the Czechoslovaks.

Czech and German Identity

As with studies of culture generally, this issue is one that perhaps provokes as much debate about its methodology as in its conclusions. Some examples, however, drawn from literature and secondary sources and representing a period of hundreds of years help to give some indication of the centrality of the Germans to the Czech and Czechoslovak identity.

First, however, at least one explanatory word is imperative. The term 'German' is perhaps not as helpful as 'Germanic' or 'German-speaking'. From 1620 to independence in 1918, the Czechs were under Austrian rule. At the same time, however, they co-habited with Germans in these lands. Thus, the influence of both Germans and Austrians on the Czechs was important. To be sure, 'A distinction must...be made between nationality conflicts [between the Czechs and the Germans] on the one hand and the conflicts of the Czechs with Vienna Centralism'.¹ Nevertheless, as much as there is a necessary distinction between the

¹ Hoch, 'The Peace Conference', p. 15.

Austrians and the Germans, there is also much commonality in their impact on the Czechs. Probably as a consequence, Czechoslovaks have not always made a distinction between the Germans and the Austrians. As Milan Hauner notes, 'the "German Problem" from the Czech perspective has always meant "Austro-German"'.²

The overlapping nature of German and Austrian influence was observed at crucial junctures in pre-1918 Czechoslovak history. For example, Masaryk's decision to change his position on retaining the Austro-Hungarian empire has been explained to a large extent by his recognition of the dominance of Germany over the Empire's policies. 'We know from his [Masaryk's] testimony that it was the anticipation of German hegemony in Europe which gave the final edge to his resolution to fight Austria-Hungary.'³

Much 'Germanisation' occurred throughout the Austrian empire as a function of imperial rule, affecting minorities throughout the Empire.

A.J.P. Taylor has characterized this process anecdotally:

The enterprising son of a Czech, Roumanian or Serb peasant entered a town, learnt a German art and spoke German to his fellow shopkeepers; his children despised their father's peasant dialect, and his grandchildren, safely arrived in state jobs, forgot that they had ever been anything but Germans and town-dwellers.⁴

Such formal assimilation aside, Germanisation in the Czech lands before 1918 has been assessed as occurring largely due to the presence of Germans, rather than Austrians. After the Battle of White Mountain 1620, it was the Germans who 'endeavoured to assimilate the entire

² Milan Hauner, 'The Introduction of German Studies in the Czech Republic: a "Denkschrift"', *German History*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1993).

³ Masaryk, *Svetová revoluce*, pp. 36-7, cited in Kovtun, 'Problem of a Small Nation', p. 36.

⁴ A.J.P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1948), pp. 24-5.

interior of the country where the great majority of the inhabitants spoke Czech'.⁵

Ethnic tension arose between the Czechs and Germans in the nineteenth century with the advent of industrialisation and modernisation. This was because so much of Austria-Hungary's industry was established in Bohemia. For example, by 1914, 60 per cent of the Empire's metal industry and 75 per cent of its chemical industry were located there.

It was not simply the fact of industrialisation but its relation to the ethnic groups living in Bohemia that gave rise to tension. Industrialisation 'had begun largely within the German community'. The resulting prospect of prosperity caused the migration of Czechs to the German industrial areas so that in just the twenty years between 1880 and 1900, half a million Czechs moved to areas which had previously been minimally 80 per cent German.⁶ This became a problem, which was not necessarily preordained, because of the sense of territoriality of the two groups. A mental border was said to have existed between the two ethnic groups. Dienstbier took it for granted that a 'border' (presumably a political one) had existed between the Czechs and the Germans for a thousand years, which obviously predates by half a millennium the advent of the modern state.⁷ That ethnic groups should also identify and define themselves by territorial allegiance is not unique to the Czechs and Germans. What is important to their relationship is that it was the defining relationship for the Czechs, and that the relationship was both

⁵ Sobota, 'Political Separatism', p. 38.

⁶ Ronald M. Smelser, 'Castles on the Landscape: Czech-German Relations', in Skilling (ed.), *Czechoslovakia*, p. 84; and Ronald M. Smelser, 'German-Czech Relations in Bohemian Frontier Towns: The Industrialization-Urbanization Process', in Keith Hutchens (ed.), *Studies in East European Social History* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 62-87.

⁷ Speech at Chatham House, 5 May 1992.

one of a specific identifiable border (between the two states) but also an ethnic, linguistic and cultural one between the peoples themselves. This was particularly true among the individuals of each ethno-linguistic community who co-inhabited the same geographic space, namely the Czech border regions until the post-Second World War expulsion. The problems of the Czech-German relationship in the current century and the ways by which the post-Communist Czechoslovak government attempted to confront this legacy was to great extent determined by the evolution of that relationship before the twentieth century.

One reason why co-existence did not occur between the two groups before the creation of the Czechoslovak state was the way in which those communities developed. The Czech settlement fully replicated Czech society, recreating all the necessary societal institutions, thereby delimiting either integration into, or encroachment, by the German communities. So deep was this division, and so complete the construction by both communities of parallel structures, that 'even the internationalist-oriented socialists found themselves split in Bohemia before the dawn of this century into separate Czech and German branches'.⁸

Such parallel and discrete socio-economic development within each of the two ethnic communities suggests that contacts between them were limited. The relationship could not, and did not remain that way. The significant lesson to draw is that Germanisation was a process undertaken both formally by the Austrian Empire and informally by Germans residing in the Czech lands.

To return to the Germanic influence on the Czechs, Havel provides a contemporary statement with which to consider this influence in an historical context. He referred to the 'thousand-year-long Czechoslovak-

⁸ Smelser, 'Castles on the Landscape', p. 87.

German drama in which the motifs of tension, quarrels and war were interwoven with those of fruitful common life and *deep mutual influence*'.⁹ At least for the Czechoslovaks, as represented by Havel, Germans have had a profound impact on the Czechs. It will be argued that after the Velvet Revolution Havel engaged in what he believed was a dialogue with the German people. In fact, he was delivering a monologue to, on occasion, either a deaf or an absent or a misinterpreting audience. The explanation for this outcome lies in his misunderstanding of the disproportionate importance, in terms of national self-awareness, for the Czechs of the Germans and the virtual irrelevance of the Czechs to the Germans.

Havel was not alone among Czechs in attributing immense importance to the Germans in the constitution of the Czech identity and of the similarities of the peoples. Dissident Communist Ivan Sviták, who is perhaps a particularly good example here for the disagreements that he and Havel have had, concurred in his answer to the question 'Who are the Czechs?' Acknowledging that he risks insulting both groups, Sviták quipped: 'one could say that the Czechs are Germans who speak Czech'. While acknowledging that German influence on the Czechs has been both positive and negative, he writes, adding the emphasis himself, that 'the evidence shows very convincingly that Czech-German antagonistic contacts were the most important factor in Czech history and *that they remain crucial for future development*'.¹⁰

The Germans in the borders of what was to become the new Czechoslovak state were so numerous that a 'Czechoslovak' nation had to be created in order to justify its creation. While the Czechs and the

⁹ Cited in Edward Luca, 'Rewriting a Historical Wrong', *The Independent*, 16 March 1990.

¹⁰ Sviták, *Unbearable Burden. Volume 1*, p. 3.

Slovaks had the most linguistic commonalities of all Slavic peoples and, debatably, the closest relations as well, prior to 1918 they had never been classified or referred to as 'Czechoslovak'. The creation of a 'Czechoslovak' nationality served two related aims. It allowed the Slovaks, who numbered fewer than the Germans, to have a claim to the new state and it also supported an overall Slavic claim to the governance of the country.

Thus, with the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 based on the idea of the right to self-determination of a 'Czechoslovak' nation, Germans became a minority in the new state. By the same measure, however, the Sudeten German – a term and concept which had not existed before – was also created.¹¹

The construction of a Czechoslovak people and the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic did not indicate that the Czechoslovaks sought to dominate or discriminate against their German minority. In the interwar period relations between Czechs and Germans were generally believed to be good. In 1934, one Czech academic observed: 'Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia...is the classic area of racial co-existence'. The relationship was categorised as symbiotic, having developed 'organically' and possessing 'deep roots'. To prove the point further, the concept of symbiosis was advanced by a German Professor who was also in the Czechoslovak Cabinet.¹²

Despite the symbiosis of the two communities in the First Republic, many Sudeten Germans supported Nazi Germany's assertion of the right to national self-determination and the claim that German minorities throughout Europe had the right to live under a common regime. Specific

¹¹ Smelser, 'Castles', p. 88.

¹² Sobota, 'Political Separatism', p. 37.

claims against Czechoslovakia's right to govern the Sudeten Germans were made by Konrad Heinlein's National Socialist Movement. Heinlein's demands on Czechoslovakia exceeded his Karlsbad Programme of 24 April 1938 which entailed an autonomous German area in Czechoslovakia; he also made clear that the appropriate policy for the Sudeten Germans was that of National Socialism. Furthermore, he wanted Czechoslovakia to reconfigure its foreign policy so that it no longer 'led the State into the ranks of the enemies of the German people'.¹³ These demands were obviously untenable for Czechoslovakia.

The formal dismemberment of Czechoslovakia began in September 1938 with the Munich Agreement and ended in March 1939. As we have seen in chapter 1 the Sudetenland was ceded to Germany. This territory, running along all of Czechoslovakia's borders with Germany (including those of annexed Austria) was not only a significant loss of land; it also removed Czechoslovakia's defenses and much of its arms industry. On 15 March 1939 Germany announced the formal absorption of the remainder of the Czech Lands into the Third Reich under the name the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Hitler celebrated the annexation with a personal visit to Prague Castle. The next day, an independent Slovakia was proclaimed under Josef Tiso, who made his country's allegiance to Nazi Germany unambiguous.

The Munich Agreement and the subsequent destruction of Czechoslovakia produced at least two legacies for Czechoslovak foreign-policy thinking. First, political ideals such as national self-determination, which had justified the creation of the Czechoslovak republic in 1918, could be manipulated against their benefactors and supporters. Second, Czechoslovakia had ample and vivid evidence that no matter how good an

¹³ Wheeler-Bennett, *Munich*, pp. 46-7.

international citizen the country may have been in the interwar era, the interests of the Great Powers could override Czechoslovakia's interests. Third, the resulting distrust of the British and French led, if only out of desperation, to undue trust in the Soviet Union.

Even at the height of the Second World War, Beneš was charting a post-war foreign policy which relied heavily on the Soviet Union. The answer to the perennial tension between Czechs and Germans was to be found in Beneš's wartime deal with Stalin. In 1943 Beneš formalised what was expected to be Czechoslovakia's post-war relations with the Soviet Union. As part of that agreement Beneš received the support of Stalin for the expulsion of Sudeten Germans, 'long before Beneš could secure similar consent from London and Washington'. Whereas the British and Americans were hesitant about the idea, as one historian writes, Beneš received 'instant approval from the Soviet government for his Sudeten German solution'. By contrast, the Anglo-American hesitation over approving the expulsion came from their 'best humanitarian traditions'.¹⁴

Whatever the morality of the decision to expel the Sudeten Germans, nearly three million Germans were forced to leave Czechoslovakia after the war. The decision was justified because of the complicity of the overwhelming majority of the Sudeten Germans with Heinlein's nationalist and revisionist party.

The result of the expulsion was that Germans accounted for a single percent of the Czechoslovak population in 1950, whereas they had been 22 percent in 1930. Government practices sought to limit the identity of those Germans who remained in Czechoslovakia, and they 'were prohibited from setting up their own schools or cult organizations and were not

¹⁴ Ullmann, 'Beneš', p. 57.

recognized as an ethnic minority until the Prague Spring reforms'.¹⁵ After the Velvet Revolution only 62,000 Czechoslovak citizens considered themselves to be German.¹⁶

The expulsion can be seen as outside the tradition of Czech dealings with the German minority. In another context, George Kovtun maintained 'The Czech-German settlement had been under discussion since 1848, and the discussion could have continued, now in Prague [after independence in 1918] instead of Vienna. There was no justification for the political and physical violence of Nazism which came into play after a long history of difficult, sometimes bitter, but always peaceful Czech-German negotiations. At least the Czech-German problem had a democratic, civilized political environment in the First Republic.'¹⁷ In the 1970s Czechoslovak dissidents began debating the morality of the expulsion. The consensus was that the expulsion was based on the principle of collective guilt and was therefore unjustified. This thinking underscored Havel's need to apologise to the German people for the expulsion. The political implications of doing so, however, went further than simply enacting an ethical principle.

German Identity and Central and East Europe

Germany has clearly been important in the development of Czech and Czechoslovak identity. But, the relationship has not been reciprocal. Instead, Germany sees itself as having a unique and profound role in, and relationship with, the whole of Central and Eastern Europe.

¹⁵ Janusz Bugajski, *Nations in Turmoil* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p. 93.

¹⁶ *Le Monde*, 16 October 1990.

¹⁷ Kovtun, 'Small Nation', p. 37.

Germany's image of itself in this region was most starkly presented in the two world wars with the conception of *Drang nach Osten* and the German state's organic need for territory and material, which was to be found in Eastern Europe. At various times in the Cold War, West Germany undertook a special role for itself with regard to Eastern Europe in the form of its *Ostpolitik*.¹⁸

This is not to suggest that this policy towards the Soviet bloc was irreconcilable with overall Western policy or that it did not indirectly serve other Western goals.¹⁹

Regardless of its intentions, *Ostpolitik* distinguished Germany from other Western countries in its role in and dealings with Eastern Europe. As Pierre Hassner has observed: 'In a way, the Federal Republic is the only Western country which really *has* an *Ostpolitik* and which really cares about Eastern Europe, since the two are connected both by immediate problems and by fundamental concerns.' These connections are all the stronger because 'The notion of Eastern Europe, and even less of Central Europe, cannot be an abstract issue in German eyes. Eastern Europe is inextricably involved in the question of German identity and orientation.'²⁰ German observers reinforce the idea of Germany having a special role with regard to Central and Eastern Europe. Dr Bernhard Vogel, President of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and former Minister

¹⁸ See William E. Griffith, *The Ostpolitik of the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978); and, more recently, Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name* (London: Vintage, 1994).

¹⁹ See, for example, the comments of representative of the German Chancellery which suggest that *Ostpolitik* is actually a Western, rather than German policy: 'Germany's *Ostpolitik* was, is and remains embedded in the collective policy of the West, in the formation of which Germany itself is actively involved'. Uwe Kaestner, 'West Germany's *Ostpolitik*', in Peter R. Weilemann, Georg Brunner and Rudolf L. Tökés (eds), *Upheaval Against the Plan* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 1991), p. 158.

²⁰ Pierre Hassner, 'West Germany's *Ostpolitik*: A Western View', in *ibid.*, p. 170.

President of Land Rhineland-Palatinate, argued 'Territorially, culturally and, in spite of the sometimes bitter experiences of the past, historically we are closer to the countries of East-Central Europe than are most of the Federal Republic's Western partners'.²¹ Representatives of the German government concur, attributing Germany's distinct role to 'elementary geographical and geo-strategic facts, with Germany's position as a cultural and economic mediator, a position which developed from the time of the early Middle Ages'.²²

With the demise of the Cold War presumably this special role would be allowed to resume its historical significance. With German reunification presumably also the country would eventually be able to assume that role with greater vigour. Was the Czechoslovak leadership, unlike many others, correct to assess benevolently German unification and Germany's subsequent intentions?

GEOPOLITICS OF GERMAN UNIFICATION

The defeat of communism in East Germany, which preceded the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia by a few days, soon raised the now-completed fact of German reunification. Within a year, Europe's strongest economy had added five provinces and become the continent's second most populous country. Reaction from the international community was generally one of alarm, which François Mauriac summarised with 'I love Germany so much that I prefer to have two of them'.²³ *Le Monde* noted

²¹ Bernhard Vogel, 'East-Central Europe: A Challenge to the Germans', in *ibid.*, p. 155.

²² Kaestner, '*Ostpolitik*', p. 159.

²³ Quoted in, among others, *The Financial Times*, 27 October 1989.

that Czechoslovakia was the only country to border both Germanies, and that it had greater historical justification than others to be concerned by the prospect of a strong Germany in the centre of Europe.²⁴

Havel, by contrast, adopted a distinctive position on German reunification. In keeping with his belief in the importance of the individual word, Havel deliberately refrained from using the word 'reunification' because it invoked reference to Germany's 1937 borders.²⁵ While Zbigniew Brzezinski, as the most celebrated among many, called German unification 'the most significant geopolitical change produced by the end of the Cold War',²⁶ Havel seemed to disregard any geopolitical consequences arising from the event. If anything, he saw unification as a necessary and positive development which would benefit all of Europe.

In addition to discounting the geopolitical implications of unification, Havel also ignored what an observer might consider the closed nature by which the process of unification was allowed to happen. This may have contradicted Havel's principles of open discussion.

Havel should not be considered naive in his views of German unification and he was not completely unaware of its nature and consequences. It was even commented that occasional elements of *realpolitik* could be seen in Havel's approach to German relations.²⁷ His view presumed that political consciousness, rather than historical

²⁴ *Le Monde*, 4 January 1990.

²⁵ See his comments on Havel's visit to Berlin, 2 January 1990, in *International Herald Tribune*, 3 January 1990. In keeping with Havel's choice, 'unification' will be used hereafter.

²⁶ Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'The Consequences of the End of the Cold War for International Security', in *New Dimensions in International Security* (London: IISS Adelphi Paper No. 265, Winter 1991/92), p. 8.

²⁷ '*Realpolitik* nudged its way into the mutual adoration'. See, for example, Edward Lucas, 'Rewriting a Historical Wrong', *The Independent* 16 March 1990.

experience, would determine united Germany's behaviour. Visiting Berlin on 2 January 1990 as part of his first state visit abroad, he said emotions had to be calmed before unification occurred. Stating that 'Germany virtually surrounds us,' he asked Germany to 'free its neighbors of fear, specifically the fear of a Greater Germany', and added that 'A democratic system in Germany (is) more important than the possibility that it might become one nation'.²⁸ He reiterated, 'If Germany is a democratic state I will not be afraid of it, even if it had 100 million people. On the other hand, I would be afraid of Germany if it were a totalitarian state with two million people.'²⁹

Havel even encouraged the unification of the Germanies. While in Berlin, he stood near the reopened Brandenburg Gate and the Wall. Berliners applauded him when he offered to send Czechoslovak workers to tear down the remainder of the Wall. He repeated the words of President John F. Kennedy, 'Ich bin Berliner' (omitting the use of 'ein') but qualifying the statement to 'a new era and in a new context.' This was but one example of how Havel tried to reassure the world of Germany's democratic inclination. He was even 'at pains' to do so for the Poles.³⁰

It was, however, particularly because Havel concerned himself with the process of unification that the way it occurred may reflect poorly on his policy. This is not to say that Czechoslovakia could have influenced the process; nevertheless Havel expressed views on how politics generally should work and how reunification should occur.

²⁸ Marc Fisher, 'East Germany To Raze Rest Of The Berlin Wall; Czechoslovak Leader Visits Both Germanys', *The Washington Post*, 3 January 1990.

²⁹ Cited in, for example, Lionel Barber, 'Havel Wins US Pledge of Trade Ties', *The Financial Times*, 21 February 1990.

³⁰ Anna Sabbat-Swidlicka, 'Havel in Poland: Beyond Bilateral Relations', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 7 (16 February 1990), p. 37.

Havel was not alone in assigning criteria to the process by which German unification should occur. On 9 December 1989, the European Council endorsed it, but qualified it through the requirements of 'free self-determination in a peaceful and democratic process, in full respect of the relevant agreements and treaties and of all the principles defined by the Helsinki Final Act, within a context of dialogue and East-West cooperation'.³¹

Regarding the process of unification, for example, Havel warned against, as a journalist put it, 'an overhurried and chaotic unification process', one that Havel especially feared might occur 'as a mere result of election fever'.³² An overview of scholarly assessments of the unification process indicate that quite a different process allowed for the united of the two Germanies.

In contrast to Havel's apparent desire for openness in politics, the process of deciding unification occurred with little public discussion; even major powers at times felt excluded from the process. While the history of German unification cannot be reviewed in detail here, it is generally thought that the process occurred with little consultation by Germany with other states. This was more than simply an expression of Germans enjoying their entitlement to self-determination, as NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner called it.³³

Commentators, for example, have judged German consultation with its key allies as minimal: 'German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's original

³¹ Communication from the EC Commission, *The Community and German Reunification* SEC(90) 751, 20 April 1990, p. 1, cited in Peter van Ham, *The EC, Eastern Europe and European Unity: Discord, Collaboration and Integration Since 1947* (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1992), pp. 162-3.

³² Lucas, 'Rewriting'.

³³ 'German Unification', NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner's address to the Council on 3 October 1990, in *NATO Review* Vol. 38, No. 5 (October 1990), p. 1.

proposal for reunification was presented following only minimal consultation with Washington; indeed, it annoyed the United States and several Western states at the time. The Kohl-Gorbachev agreement in July 1990 that confirmed Soviet acceptance of unification and established a timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet forces from eastern Germany was almost ostentatiously a bilateral German-Soviet affair. U.S. participation occurred in the margins.³⁴ If Bonn undertook to inform the US of its 10-point plan for unification, France and Britain were apparently not even entitled to that.³⁵ Italian Foreign Minister Gianni de Michelis was positive that the participation of the two Germanies in two-plus-four talks showed acknowledgement of international interests in the unification process, he believed that the process did not fulfil Italian interests, and by implication, those of other states excluded in the Talks.³⁶

Regardless of whether France and Britain actually opposed the principle of reunification, it seemed that they were presented with an accomplished fact. After Kohl promised Bush that a united Germany would not reduce the FRG's commitment to the West, the US essentially forced Britain and France to agree to the four conditions enabling reunification.³⁷

An indication of Havel's desire to have the implications of unification discussed more widely was his support for the inclusion of Poland in the 4-plus-2 talks. But that was not to be. His future

³⁴ Ted Galen Carpenter, 'The New World Disorder', *Foreign Policy* No. 84 (Fall 1991), p. 28

³⁵ William Horsely, 'United Germany's Seven Cardinal Sins: A Critique of German Foreign Policy', *Millennium* Vol. 21, No. 2 (Summer 1992), p. 230.

³⁶ Interview with Italian Foreign Minister Gianni de Michelis, *La Repubblica*, 15 February 1990, in Lawrence Freedman (ed.), *Europe Transformed* (London: Tri-Service Press, 1990), p. 489.

³⁷ See Alexander Moens, 'American Diplomacy and German Reunification', *Survival* Vol. XXXIII, No. 6 (Nov./Dec. 1991), p. 533.

ambassador to Warsaw was content to say that Poland got a guarantee of its western border, calling that fact itself a victory.³⁸ On the eve of the signing of the Czechoslovak-German Treaty on Good Neighbourliness, Finance Minister Klaus declared that Czechoslovakia had in fact lost out in the process.³⁹

As will be discussed in the penultimate chapter, Czechoslovak integration into West European institutional structures became increasingly important to the Havel government. Relations with Germany were seen as a means, perhaps even the primary means, to that end. Some commentators have been blunt in their assessment of Havel's motivations for endorsing German unity: 'Havel publicly supported German reunification and appeared to underscore Czechoslovak-German reconciliation as the cornerstone of his new European foreign policy and of economic integration with the West.'⁴⁰ Others have asked why Germany lent the kind of support to Czechoslovakia (and also to Poland) for admission into Western institutions: 'Was the initiative, most positively, a gesture of good will toward former victims or, neutrally, the expression or desire to push the German defense frontier forward while stilling fears of a too forward and unilateral German foreign policy or, lastly and negatively, an attempt to facilitate the area's political-economic colonization under NATO's military cover?'⁴¹

Whatever Havel's motivations in supporting German unification, he believed Germany to be democratic and the process of unification to have occurred democratically and he undertook to reassure others of that. Most

³⁸ Interview with former Ambassador to Poland Markéta Fialková-Němcová, 14 September 1995.

³⁹ RFE B-Wire, 27 February 1992.

⁴⁰ Bugajski, *Nations in Turmoil*, p. 204.

⁴¹ George Liska, *Return to the Heartland & Rebirth of the Old Order* (Washington: The Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute, 1994), p. 92.

remarkably, the unification of Germany was the fulfilment of the 1985 Czechoslovak dissident proposal entitled the 'Prague Appeal'. As Vondra said in 1990:

As far as the general line of our foreign policy is concerned, it is to be noted that our strategy regarding the pan-European process and the re-unification of Germany was formulated much earlier than January 1990. This strategy was formulated in 1985 in an inchoate form, but nevertheless in very concrete terms, when Charter 77 issued the Prague Appeal. What then seemed a utopia is now reality.⁴²

For Czechoslovak decision-makers, German unification vindicated their dissident conception of international politics.

The Costs to Czechoslovakia of German Unification

The uninhibited support of the Czechoslovak government for German unification did not detract from the concrete effects of geographical proximity. Smaller problems of geography were ignored, such as that because much of the country's frontiers are contiguous with Austria and Germany, Czechoslovakia, with its subsidized economy, immediately became a shopping paradise. On 5 March 1990 the export of numerous consumer goods had to be banned entirely because Germans and Austrians were emptying shops.⁴³ Other minor developments included unprecedented traffic jams caused by travel without restrictions between West Germany and Czechoslovakia in the beginning of July 1990.

Disrespect for Czechoslovak interests in the process of German unification was revealed in the impact on Czechoslovakia of the integration of East Germany's economy into West Germany's. While some unforeseen friction had to accompany the process, both German and

⁴² 'View from the Castle', p. 12.

⁴³ *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 March 1990.

Czechoslovak sources felt that nothing was inevitable and that more could have been done to limit the consequences for Czechoslovakia.

German radio acknowledged that Czechoslovak 'Trade contacts with the former GDR are a "sore point" for Prague because the commitments from these mainly economic cooperation contacts were hardly kept at all by the German side'. German Radio also quoted the Czechoslovak Prime Minister as saying 'It is not possible to suspend old ties to the economy of the former GDR within one, two, or three years'.⁴⁴ This may have been the Czechoslovak hope or expectation but the reality proved different as trade between the two former socialist allies shrivelled, leaving Czechoslovakia with substantial debts owed to it by the GDR. East Germany doubled its exchange rate and did not complete trade agreements with Czechoslovakia, leaving the latter with a trade deficit of almost 700 million convertible roubles. The loss of such trade has been considered among the most severe external shocks post-Communist Czechoslovakia faced.⁴⁵

The effect was serious enough for Deputy Foreign Minister Zdenko Pirek to inform the European Parliament that unification was 'already hurting the Czechoslovak economy. Trade between Czechoslovakia and the GDR had fallen because the GDR had reduced its imports from Czechoslovakia.'⁴⁶ Emerging from meetings on bilateral trade with East German officials, the Czechoslovak Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade

⁴⁴ Hamburg DPA, 27 November 1990, in *FBIS*, 29 November 1990, P. 23.

⁴⁵ Livia Klausová places German unification with the breakdown of East bloc trade and the collapse of Iraqi oil. 'Economic Challenges and Opportunities in Central Europe: The Case of Czechoslovakia', in Otto Pick (ed.), *The Cold War Legacy in Europe* (London: Pinter, 1991), p. 116.

⁴⁶ RFE, *Report on Eastern Europe*, 13 July 1990, p. 59.

Miroslav Cuker said on 19 July 1990 that the balance of payments was deteriorating to the detriment of his country.⁴⁷

The Czechoslovak government retaliated by increasing its exchange rate, and Federal Trade Minister Strancák said he would seek steps to halt Czechoslovak firms from conducting all but vital trade with the GDR.⁴⁸ One Czechoslovak newspaper observed that Strancák demonstrated 'an anger unusual in foreign relations'.⁴⁹ The view from the Czechoslovak side was that the collapse of Czechoslovak-East German trade, and especially the residue of debts was not a necessary consequence of unification but avoidable.

Regardless of these problems, the Western media extolled Havel for his disregard for the geopolitical factors of German reunification. *The Guardian* wrote 'his argument is refreshingly straightforward: If the only good Germany is a democratic Germany, then we should have enough vision to disregard the chill contingencies spelt out on the geopolitical map'.⁵⁰

Havel may well have assessed, better than most contemporary commentators or leaders, the benevolence of Germany. Doubtless, the military-political threat that Germany represented to the Czechoslovak state after 1989 was probably less than at any other time this century.⁵¹ The geopolitical considerations surrounding German unification which preoccupied West European leaders and Western academics were

⁴⁷ ČTK, 19 July 1990, in *FBIS*, 20 July 1990, p. 14.

⁴⁸ *The Times*; and *The Financial Times*, 8 August 1990.

⁴⁹ *Mladá fronta dnes*, 8 August 1990.

⁵⁰ *The Guardian*, 3 January 1990.

⁵¹ Sir Michael Howard maintained 'as one whose conscious political experience now extends over half a century, I can say that I would rather be living in 1989 than in 1939 - or indeed at any date between the two'. *The Lessons of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 5.

almost virtually ignored by Havel; instead, he saw unification as the first and necessary stage for the reintegration of Europe. The Czechoslovak leadership, in Dienstbier's words, was satisfied that Germany was 'democratic and European'.⁵²

For all the apparent benevolence in Havel's policy towards Germany it also served the two-fold aim of Czechoslovakia foreign policy: the integration of the country into a wider European order and the reconstruction of the European order. The first programme can be seen as a direct expression of national interest; the second belongs to the broader Havel-Dienstbier idealist programme. While the Czechoslovak-German Treaty of Good Neighbourliness is discussed below, it is necessary here to recall that Havel said the Treaty would pave the way into the European Community.

It is clear that Germany, for whatever reason, was prominent, even predominant in Havel's foreign policy. Even if his government did not mean this, his actions were certainly taken by others to signify that. Whatever his larger designs and whatever Germany's place in them, Havel's civic foreign policy was seen as giving more to Germany than most Czechoslovaks or Germans, expected or believed necessary.

For their part, 'West German officials say Havel has made a special point of stressing ties with Germany. They say Havel deliberately made von Weizsaecker the first foreign head of state to visit Czechoslovakia since its revolution. They also note Havel made his first foreign visit as head of state to Germany - to East Berlin and Munich'.⁵³ As a practical indication of the importance of Germany in Czechoslovak foreign policy, by the time of von Weizsäcker's March 1990 visit, Dienstbier had already met four times with his German counterpart.

⁵² *Mladá fronta dnes*, 6 February 1992.

⁵³ 'Von Weizsaecker to CS Tomorrow', RFE/RL B-Wire, 14 March 1990.

Such pragmatism seems to compromise the notion of disinterested idealism in Havel's foreign policy. But a moral foreign policy need not obstruct the achievement of national interests. Nevertheless, the antagonism between selflessness and self-interest in Havel's relations with Germany and Austria continued in his treatment of mutual historical issues.

APOLOGY AND FORGIVENESS IN RELATIONS WITH GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

In effect, Havel began his Presidential political relations with the Germanies before he was elected President. He did this by addressing what he believed to be an unresolved moral issue in Czechoslovak-German relations. He declared that Czechoslovakia was morally obliged to apologise to Germany for the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans following the end of the Second World War. His comments were used against him once he was in office by a politically desperate Czechoslovak Communist Party. But this did not deter him. His view was confirmed as a governmental position by Dienstbier, who accompanied Havel on their first state visit abroad, which was, significantly, to the GDR and the FRG. During the visit, Havel formally reiterated the need to apologise, and subsequently equated fear of the Germans to anti-Semitism.⁵⁴

As we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, Havel's apology has its roots in a debate among Czechoslovak dissidents in the 1970s. The postwar expulsion was seen by many as the conclusion to, or even the 'ultimate victory' in, the thousand-year struggle of the Czechs against the Germans.⁵⁵ The grounds for the expulsion and the means by which it

⁵⁴ *International Herald Tribune*, 17-18 March 1990.

⁵⁵ For a Western analyst's reference, see Wingfield, 'Velvet Revolution', p. 94; for a reference by a Czechoslovak, see Miloš Hájek, 'Několik poznámek k Danubiově článku "Tézy o vysídlení československých Němců"', in *Češi*

was conducted led Czechoslovak independent intellectuals to consider the action morally indefensible and illegal.⁵⁶

While some, notably the acclaimed Czech-born film director Miloš Forman, contended that Havel's declaration of the need to apologise represents a 'noble civilized effort' to commence the reconstruction of Central and East Europe,⁵⁷ the Sudeten issue reanimated historic Czech hostility on a popular level toward Germany.⁵⁸ In fact, it could be said that average Czechoslovaks did not fear German unification itself, but demands on them by the Sudeten Germans. Czech Prime Minister Petr Pithart acknowledged that Czechoslovak public opinion was 'not completely ready to accept' German reunification. However, he suggested, the fear was not of a large Germany, but of the consequences of the removal of the Sudeten Germans: 'People, especially in the regions bordering the frontier, feel afraid that Germans will seek to return'.⁵⁹

Some Western commentators cautioned in 1990 against demands that Germans apologise for their crimes.⁶⁰ Havel went in the opposite direction. To an extent it can be said that Havel's apology sparked similar gestures from the German government. A British newspaper headline, for

Němci odsun, p. 152.

⁵⁶ For dissident debates on the revisions of the official policy of the expulsion, see the reproduction of essays in *Češi Němci odsun*. For a synthesis of the debate in English, see Bradley F. Adams, 'Morality, Wisdom and Revision: The Czech Opposition of the 1970s and the Expulsion of the Sudeten Germans', *East European Politics and Societies* Vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring 1995), pp. 234-55.

⁵⁷ Milos Forman, 'Havel is Right About Reconciliation', *International Herald Tribune*, 10 January 1990.

⁵⁸ See comments in *International Herald Tribune*, 5 January 1990.

⁵⁹ *International Herald Tribune*, 26 February 1990.

⁶⁰ 'Germans quickly tire of lectures from foreigners demanding that they apologize once again for crimes committed before most of the current German population was born'. John J. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security* Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer 1990), p. 56.

example, exclaimed 'Bonn pleads for Prague's forgiveness over Hitler'.⁶¹ There may have been benefits to Czechoslovakia of Havel's stage-managing of his reconciliation with Germany. As the same report affirmed: 'The symbolism of Herr Richard von Weizsäcker's arrival on this anniversary [of Hitler's ceremonial arrival in Prague] - Mr Havel's deliberate choice - was not lost on his West German counterpart'.

Von Weizsäcker acknowledged this point, declaring 'Everyone in our country understands the profound symbolism of this step we take together for peace. Fifty-one years ago the German people marched militarily into your country. A profound injustice was brought to your peoples by the Germans'.⁶²

But such a gesture on the part of Germany was clearly limited. First, that von Weizsäcker acknowledged what Havel's symbolic gesture meant probably reflected more on von Weizsäcker, and on Havel's opinion of him, than on Germany as a whole. He had a personal history of accepting German contrition such as in his 'internationally admired' address on the fortieth anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany.⁶³ Havel spoke of him almost as he might have described Masaryk: as a grey-haired wise professor with charm.⁶⁴

Second, as much as von Weizsäcker claimed to speak on behalf of the German people, substantial limitations to that quickly and forcefully demonstrated themselves. Expellees and their descendants began deliberating a return to the Sudetenland. Some politicians, such as Bavarian Prime Minister Max Strebl, an expellee, demanded the

⁶¹ Peter Green, 'Bonn Pleads for Prague's Forgiveness over Hitler', *The Times*, 16 March 1990.

⁶² Cited in *ibid.*

⁶³ 'Von Weizsaecker to CS Tomorrow', RFE/RL B-Wire, 14 March 1990.

⁶⁴ Havel, *Letní přemítání*, p. 78.

Czechoslovak government apologise.⁶⁵ The strength of the Sudeten German claims were all the more notable considering political-economic conditions at the time. Czech author Ota Filip, residing in Germany, said that what he called the 'usual affair' of the Sudeten Germans was uninteresting in Germany and was overshadowed by problems of financing German unification.⁶⁶

Nevertheless, the apology was seen by much of the Czechoslovak population as unnecessary and unfounded. While the 'civic' nature of Havel's foreign policy dictated moral considerations, it also called for a high degree of democratic input. On this issue at least, the 'civic' foreign policy could not accommodate both morality and public opinion. A civic foreign policy, like a *realpolitik* foreign policy, can have contradictory and mutually exclusive components. That dichotomy was further illustrated in the negotiations for and the content of the German-Czechoslovak Treaty of Friendship and Good Neighbourliness.

The German-Czechoslovak Treaty on Good Neighbourliness

The Treaty was to lay the foundations of new relations, as a Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry spokesman explained two days before its signing.⁶⁷ It succeeded in fulfilling demands on both sides. The Czechoslovak government acknowledged the wrongfulness of the postwar expulsion of Germans; the German government abandoned demands for their compensation and reiterated its lack of territorial claims against Czechoslovakia. Germany also pledged to assist the country's entry into

⁶⁵ *The Guardian*, 15 March 1990.

⁶⁶ 'O Němcích, Čechách a národní hrdosti" Rozhovor se spisovatelem Otou Filipem', *Listy* (Vol. XXIV, No. 1, 1994), p. 47.

⁶⁷ DPA, 25 February 1992, in *SWB*, 26 February 1992.

the EC. For all of the positive elements of the Treaty, it was, however, 'uncivic' in both the way it was devised and how it was conceived.

The reformulation of the Treaty, which the Czechoslovak government presented as the new foundations for relations with Germany, effectively occurred in secret. Details of the contents of the Treaty were limited to 'occasional rumours' in the press. Dienstbier was overt in his intention to keep the content of the Treaty out of the federal parliamentary elections of 1992. He said that if the Treaty were not signed according to schedule, namely in February 1992, ratification would also be unlikely before the elections. Dienstbier told Genscher in January 1992 that the Treaty needed to be signed by 15 February to avoid becoming an election issue,⁶⁸ which allowed a German report to summarise Dienstbier's feelings that Czechoslovak-German relations 'were too serious a matter to be exposed to the bright lights of an election campaign'.⁶⁹

Dienstbier's concern, while seemingly undemocratic, was also understandable. Even before the precise content of the Treaty became public, popular sentiments attacked the Czechoslovak government's actions. One commentator wrote,

Poland emphatically held out for and won from the united Germany a treaty on the permanency of the Oder-Neisse border while we, thanks to our moderation, indolence, and perhaps our national characteristic of a tendency to dither, remain empty-handed on countering demands by Sudeten Germans on Czechoslovakia.⁷⁰

Similarly, once the Treaty was initialled by German President von Weizsäcker on 7 October 1991, the left-wing Czechoslovak press mounted a campaign to derail it.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Jan Obrman, 'Czechoslovak Assembly Affirms German Friendship Treaty', *RFE/RL Research Report* Vol. 1, No. 21 (22 May 1992), p. 19.

⁶⁹ ADN in German, 19 January 1992, in *SWB*, 24 January 1992.

⁷⁰ Olga Jerabková, Prague Domestic Service, 19 May 1991, *JPRS-EER*, 31 May 1991, p. 9.

⁷¹ Obrman, 'Assembly Affirms Treaty', p. 19.

The hostile response of sections of the Czechoslovak public to the prospect of an 'apologetic' and conciliatory treaty with Germans proved the tactical necessity of Dienstbier's silence on its contents. But by its nature, this tactic also meant that public debate and popular participation on a key issue was deliberately stifled.

The Czechoslovak government could take solace that boisterous opposition to the Treaty was limited to specific groups. For example, when the Treaty was being signed in Prague Castle, only one or two thousand predominantly elderly Czechoslovaks protested. Havel said the demonstration 'did not appear to me as being especially big, important and dramatic', although he added 'I do not at all underrate these manifestations'.⁷² What the Czechoslovak government may have underrated was the popular support for the principle of the 'expulsion' of the Sudeten Germans, which rated 58 percent among Czechs, 49 percent among Moravians and 30 percent among Slovaks.⁷³ Specifically, the Treaty did not address the concerns of any of the groups that opposed aspects of the Treaty. For example, the Treaty was seen as giving concessions to the Sudeten Germans, while not compensating, as a Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry spokesman conceded, Czechoslovak victims of German wartime camps.⁷⁴ Despite this, Czechoslovaks from varying persuasions expressed dissatisfaction with the way the Treaty was written, conceived and implemented.

In terms of content, the Treaty reversed Czechoslovak Communist practice. The Communist regime officially referred to the removal of the Sudeten Germans as a 'transfer'. The Treaty adopted the word 'expulsion'. Dienstbier defended this, declaring that only three sentences of the

⁷² Radio Czechoslovakia, 27 February 1992, in *SWB*, 29 February 1992.

⁷³ *Rudé právo*, 27 March 1992.

⁷⁴ DPA in German, 25 February 1992, in *SWB*, 26 February 1992.

Treaty dealt with the past while the remainder looked to the future and provided for a specific form of cooperation.⁷⁵

On a practical level, the Czechoslovak government discounted reversing any legislation which would have assisted in strengthening the Sudeten German claims. Dienstbier, for example, rejected outright the suggestion of annulling the decrees by President Beneš which laid out the expulsion.⁷⁶ And throughout the controversy, Havel and Dienstbier avoided granting citizenship or returning property to the Sudeten Germans. Dienstbier frequently stated that the Treaty did not allow for the repossession of property, a fear which was circulating widely.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, German radio reported that he had 'pointed out that the treaty deliberately left open the question of the assets of the Sudeten Germans'.⁷⁸

John Mearsheimer advised that 'others should not ask today's Germans to apologize for crimes they did not commit'.⁷⁹ By the same token, the Germans should not have expected contemporary Czechoslovaks to accept guilt for a previous generation's crime. As one Czechoslovak commentator wrote, 'If we reject the collective guilt of the German nation, then there can be no collective apology on the part of the Czech nation, either for the acts of individuals or fanatical groups of misguided people'.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Interviewed in *Mladá fronta dnes*, 6 February 1992.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ See, for example, his interview on Radio Czechoslovakia, 25 February 1992, *SWB*, 27 February 1992.

⁷⁸ ADN in German, 19 January 1992, in *SWB*, 24 January 1992.

⁷⁹ Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future', p. 56.

⁸⁰ Jerabková, Prague Domestic Service, p. 9.

While an outside observer might place Czechoslovakia favourably on a balance sheet of guilt between itself and Germany, Havel's leadership dispensed with such equations, seeing the apology as morally necessary. Whatever the domestic pressures on Kohl's government, the end result was that the morally correct Czechoslovak gesture not only failed to generate reciprocity but probably only encouraged greater demands by Sudeten Germans, and through them, by the German government itself.

The issue of Sudeten Germans continued after the signing of the Treaty and the breakup of Czechoslovakia. While Havel had previously been categoric on not responding to Sudeten claims that were made unofficially, he later acknowledged discussions with Sudeten Germans were being undertaken at 'level of localities and of institutions' and said he sought to engage the foreign affairs committee of the Czech parliament in such discussions. The Germans saw Havel as conciliatory towards the Sudeten Germans. For example, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel 'pointed out the interest of the German government in dialogue between the Czech leadership and Sudeten Germans', and a German government spokesman 'said that President Havel stressed the readiness of the Czech side to conduct a dialogue with Sudeten Germans in the interest of understanding between the Czechs and Sudeten Germans'.⁸¹

The Case Of Kurt Waldheim

A similar case of unilateral forgiveness was made by Havel in his dealings with Austrian Chancellor Kurt Waldheim. Waldheim was diplomatically marginalised by the international community following the belated release of details on his wartime service as a German officer in Yugoslavia. While

⁸¹ ČTK, 26 April 1993, in *SWB*, 30 April 1993.

the findings of an independent international commission on his guilt were inconclusive, his international censure included being placed on an American 'watch list' of unwanted persons and his ostracism by all world leaders, with the exception of Cyprus's George Vassiliou.

Despite this international censure, Havel agreed to meet the Chancellor at the ceremonies opening the Salzburg Music Festival on 26 July 1990. He did this even after an open letter by Charter 77 asked him to reconsider his decision.⁸² He explained his actions by equating the international boycott of Waldheim to a game and calling it 'a cliché and a ritual devoid of moral qualities'. He said politicians behaved toward Waldheim not out of moral concern but because they feared each other and had to conform to the boycott; any morality the act once had was therefore lost.⁸³

Waldheim introduced Havel at the Festival as 'living proof that the explosive power of culture can be stronger than weapons and repressive force'.⁸⁴ Havel, however, used his keynote address to make a characteristic reference to the need to be truthful about one's past, declaring that those 'who rewrite their biographies...bring harm upon themselves and their fellow citizens'. He qualified his comments by stating 'In our geographic area, in which I include Austria and Czechoslovakia, everyone has stains in his life history.'⁸⁵ Such didacticism coincides with what Havel explained early in his Presidency: 'there is something

⁸² The letter was published in *Lidové noviny*, 18 July 1990.

⁸³ The original comments were made in an interview with the Austrian newspaper *Salzburger Nachrichten*. See Michael Z. Wise, 'Havel Defends Visit to Austrian Festival', *The Washington Post*, 26 July 1990.

⁸⁴ Cited in Michael Z. Wise, 'Havel Cautions Waldheim on "Lies"', *The Washington Post*, 27 July 1990.

⁸⁵ *Salzburger Nachrichten*, 22 July 1990, cited in Jiri Pehe, 'Havel's Controversial Visit to Austria', RFE, *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 32 (10 August 1990), p. 10.

good in each person, whether the person in question is a justly sentenced prisoner or a tyrannical warder'. He was also adamant that an atmosphere that evokes better qualities in people could be created.⁸⁶ If that was his intention, it had no effect on his target. The *New York Times* wrote, 'no amount of Mr. Havel's literary indirection could disguise to whom' the speech was addressed, but Waldheim was adamant that Havel was not referring to him and pronounced 'I did not rewrite my biography. I have denied nothing'.⁸⁷

Certainly Havel dismissed the international community's treatment of Waldheim and demonstrated this in his willingness to meet and shake hands with the Chancellor and sit beside him during the Festival. But he was forced to retreat in practice from his position. He made clear that he deliberated on his decision to attend and emphasised that it had been extended to him a year before, when he was a private person and, in addition, that he had agonised over the decision to attend. Waldheim, however, countered his statements by arguing that he had accepted the invitation already in January.⁸⁸ As if it were a rebuttal, Havel said he was not intending to make an official visit to Austria before the summer of 1992, when Waldheim's term would have expired.⁸⁹

Because of Havel's efforts to diminish the significance of the meeting, its venue consequently increased in importance. The Festival substituted for an official state meeting, thereby downgrading its status and importance. Havel also qualified his meeting as an 'expression of my respect for the festival and especially for the Austrian people.' He added

⁸⁶ Prague Domestic Service, 11 January 1990, in FBIS, 12 January 1990, p. 16, commenting on *Der Stern's* interview with Havel, 11 January 1990.

⁸⁷ *The New York Times*, 27 July 1990, cited in Pehe, 'Havel's Controversial', p. 11; and Wise, 'Havel Cautions'.

⁸⁸ Associated Press, 'Weizsaecker Plans Meeting with Waldheim', 20 July 1990.

⁸⁹ Wise, 'Havel Defends'.

that 'Austrians are our close neighbors, linked with us by thousands of connections, including our joint history.'⁹⁰ The meeting was limited to six hours, which Czechoslovak Chancellor Prince Schwarzenberg (who resided in Austria since his family's expulsion from Czechoslovakia in 1948) defended by saying that the President 'is a very busy man' and that he immediately thereafter had to attend the largest international meeting of Romanies in Brno.⁹¹

That Havel was forced to rely on the Festival itself as the justification for the meeting and that he qualified the nature and purpose of the meeting suggests that he ultimately believed he could not forgive in the way he wanted.

Havel's sense and implementation of apology and forgiveness could not be fully realised. Neither his domestic constituency accepted it nor was the external audience accepting and satisfied. In the case of the Sudeten Germans, they were probably encouraged by Havel's apology to seek further concessions. Havel cannot even be said to have remained fully true to his principles. Ironically, he would use the 56th anniversary of Hitler's occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, and also the fifth anniversary of his symbolic invitation to von Weizsäcker, to call on Czechs and Germans to cease making mutual apologies.⁹²

FOREIGN TRADE, CULTURE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

⁹⁰ Radio Czechoslovakia, 18 July 1990, cited in Pehe, 'Havel's Controversial'.

⁹¹ *Die Kurier*, 28 July 1990, in FBIS, 30 July 1990, p. 11.

⁹² Jiri Pehe, 'Czech Intellectuals Demand Dialogue with Sudeten Germans', OMRI Daily Digest II, No. 63 (29 March 1995).

In discounting geopolitical or strategic risks to Czechoslovakia from Germany, Havel kept company with columnist George F. Will, who in early 1990 illustrated the absence of such a military threat anecdotally:

On the first day of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August of 1968, a Czech enjoying coffee and croissant at a border-town cafe was startled when a tank rolled by, and a German-speaking head popped from a turret to say, 'Wir sind wieder da.' Here we are again. As the Soviet Union tries to orchestrate worries about German reunification, it is well to remember that the only time since 1945 that German forces violated a border, they did so under Soviet orders.⁹³

But the position of Havel and Will was uncommon among both Czechoslovak public figures and foreign observers. While a military challenge was unlikely, another form of German threat against Czechoslovakia was identified: economic colonisation. Already in February 1990, former dissident and Czechoslovak Ambassador to Washington Rita Klímová declared that the opening of socialist economies to world markets meant that:

The German-speaking parts of Europe, including Austria, succeeded where the Hapsburgs, Hitler and Bismarck were unsuccessful - in Germanizing Central and Eastern Europe by purely peaceful and laudable methods of market economic development.⁹⁴

It is necessary first to establish the nature and origins of 'Germanizing'; then the significance of this development for Czechoslovakia's civic foreign policy will be examined.

Germanization was identified through the amount of German investment in Czechoslovakia, its place in Czechoslovakia's trade relationship and the impact that its economic position had on Czechoslovak society.

⁹³ George F. Will, 'Surreal Talk About Germany', *The Washington Post*, 8 February 1990.

⁹⁴ Cited in Gene Kramer, 'US Urged to Help Czechoslovakia Avoid "Germanization"', *Associated Press*, 20 February 1990.

Foreign investment in and trade with Czechoslovakia between 1989 and 1992 clearly manifested German dominance. More than 80 percent of all foreign investment in this period was German, with several major Czechoslovak economic concerns being purchased. The German economic position in Czechoslovakia was underscored by the extent of its investments. Volkswagen succeeded in making the largest investment in the post-Communist world to that time with its bid for Czechoslovakia's automotive firm Škoda. The image of German domination of Czechoslovak industry was heightened when Volkswagen also secured 80 percent control of the Slovak-based automotive enterprise BAZ.⁹⁵ A 1992 poll of found 80 percent of Czechs believed that German capital generally 'had too large a stake in Czechoslovakia'.⁹⁶

In addition to the German preeminence in investment in Czechoslovakia, the volume of German trade with the country vastly surpassed any other Western partner, both in relative and absolute terms. Total Czechoslovak exports in 1991 to Britain, France the US and Japan *combined* were approximately one-fifth of those to Austria and Germany and one-quarter of imports.⁹⁷

Not only did the scale of German investment and the predominance of Germany in the country's new trading relationships concern Czechoslovaks, but also the assets German business appeared to seek. Always sensitive to assaults on their culture,⁹⁸ Czechoslovaks believed

⁹⁵ *The Financial Times*, 6 March 1991.

⁹⁶ Stephen F. Szabo, 'The New Germany and Central European Security', in John R. Lampe and Daniel N. Nelson (eds), *East European Security Reconsidered* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 35-54.

⁹⁷ Calculated on the basis of statistics supplied in *Country Profile: Czech Republic and Slovakia* (London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993), p. 32.

⁹⁸ For dissident views during Communism, see, A. Heneka, František Janoušek, Vilém Prečan and Jan Vladislav (eds), *A Besieged Culture: Czechoslovakia Ten Years After Helsinki* (Stockholm and Vienna: The Charta 77 Foundation and International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, 1985).

that after 1989 Czechoslovak culture was being eroded or corrupted by the impact of foreign money. German money in particular was seen as buying Czechoslovak family heirlooms: the few precious commodities the dilapidated economy possessed, usually of pre-war age, and therefore irreplaceable. Cultural relics, such as the rights to castles, were being bought by German consortiums. Renovations of historical towns such as Český Krumlov could only be afforded through the purchase of buildings by foreigners, typically German.⁹⁹

German economic influence extended not simply to the acquisition of concrete assets but also of human resources and talent. The lure of money also meant a drain of Czechoslovak talent from the country. *The Financial Times* reported that Czechoslovaks saw their leading and most promising musicians accept jobs in Germany and Austria, and consequently feared the country would 'suffer the same drain of music talent to foreign parts as in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries',¹⁰⁰ when they were assimilated under the Hapsburg empire.¹⁰¹

Added to this was the nature of the German response to concern regarding its German economic predominance. It was of little consequence that German analysts responded that German trade with Central European countries in the period under study formed a small share of Germany's total foreign trade, using spurious terminology such as 'peanuts by American standards'.¹⁰² A senior German diplomat stationed in Prague

⁹⁹ 'The New Europeans', BBC Radio 4, 9 January 1994.

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Clark, 'Czech Music after the Revolution: Prague is Paying the Price for Years of Artistic Stagnation', *The Financial Times*, 23 February 1991.

¹⁰¹ See A.J.P. Taylor's comment, referenced in footnote 4.

¹⁰² See, for example, Rainer Eisfeld, 'Mitteleuropa in Historical and Contemporary Perspective', *German Politics and Society* Issue 28 (1993), p. 44.

stated that no such thing as 'German capital' exists, only 'international capital' and he repeated that fact to Czechs. There may be logic to that statement in view of globalisation, but it, too, offered little comfort to the Czechoslovak population.

Thus, it seemed that Germans had achieved a commanding position in the Czechoslovak economy, which then translated into fear of German political dominance. Resentment of the German neighbours in the period under study was occasionally expressed publicly, but became profuse when one asked questions. It also garnered coverage in foreign media. The lack of British investment was sorely missed, a *Guardian* reporter found, but Czechoslovaks had little choice but to accept business from the Germans who continue to be 'mistrusted by a population which still remembers their last, less prosperous and peaceful invasion'.¹⁰³

If the population was merely mistrusting, the Czechoslovak Secret Service was altogether alarmed. A senior officer of the Service submitted a report to Havel that warned that German investment constituted part of plan to achieve economic and political dominance over the country.¹⁰⁴ A leading Czech figure, Jan Urban, who ran Civic Forum, declared in April 1992 that Germany's economic dominance, particularly in Czechoslovakia, presented a political challenge to European unity. In the case that any type of intervention might be required to address post-Communist turmoil, it would be Germany, and not Europe as a whole, that would decide the measure.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *The Guardian*, 25 January 1991.

¹⁰⁴ The Czech Ministry of the Interior considered the accusation groundless. *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 February-5 March 1992.

¹⁰⁵ Interviewed on 'Sunday Morning', Radio Documentary 'The New Europe', Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 4 Apr. 1992.

A chief example of German unilateral behaviour on crises in Europe was Bonn's decision to recognize Slovenia and Croatia without the agreement of the EC. See, for example, Horsley, 'United Germany's Seven'.

Even the pro-Castle, formerly dissident-run newspaper *Lidové noviny* expressed concern over the flood of German investment. One political cartoon in the newspaper portrayed Kohl nonchalantly driving a Mercedes, its jaws tearing into Bohemia,¹⁰⁶ while another featured a roadsign in the shape of Czechoslovakia exclaiming 'Tshechoslowakei Zimmer Frei'.¹⁰⁷ US Ambassador to Prague Shirley Temple Black labelled the Germans in Czechoslovakia as 'very aggressive'. While she conceded that so, too, were the Americans,¹⁰⁸ the fact that German investment constituted as much as eighty-six per cent of foreign investment in the period under study suggests that Germany's relative geographic position and historical relationship with Czechoslovakia may have been decisive.¹⁰⁹

Thus, in the period under study it Germany appeared to effect an economic domination of Czechoslovakia, and consequently was seen by many Czechoslovaks and foreigners as having a concomitantly large political influence over the country.

This result presented two ironies for Czechoslovakia's civic foreign policy. First, the economic element of that civic foreign policy was responsible for allowing private capital into the country. The Czechoslovak government, particularly in the form of its Finance Minister, recognised the imperative of private foreign investment to assist the transition to a market economy. But even Havel, who rejected commercialism and overconsumption and specified that he did not want

¹⁰⁶ *Lidové noviny*, 31 January 1992.

¹⁰⁷ *Lidové noviny*, 18 October 1990.

¹⁰⁸ *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 February–March 5 1992.

¹⁰⁹ *Toronto Star*, 23 February 1992.

such features in post-Communist Czechoslovak society, came out clearly in favour of a market economy.¹¹⁰

Germany achieved its preeminence over Czechoslovakia through peaceable means and civic, non-governmental actors, rather than through the use of force or weapons. This confirmed the dissident conception that substantive change can occur without resort to force. But it also created a result which the Czechoslovak leadership did not expect or desire.

The second irony was that those who argued that a German colonisation of Czechoslovakia was occurring explained it in terms of an inescapable historical pattern. This reasoning contradicted the Czechoslovak dissident thinking that free will could surmount historical and systemic patterns.

Even if one accepts that from 1990 to 1992, Germany achieved an economic, and by extension, political domination of Czechoslovakia, developments thereafter suggest that if German 'domination' was indeed an historically preordained pattern, that pattern has not reoccurred. And such an argument would vindicate Czechoslovakia's civic foreign policy. It is therefore necessary to assess briefly some of the factors aiding Germany's economic predominance over Czechoslovakia.

First, German investors were often deliberately aided by Czechoslovak government officials who spoke as if the Germans were preordained to have economic success in Czechoslovakia. For example, Prime Minister Čalfa¹¹¹ explained to the French publication *La Tribune*

¹¹⁰ This is not an obvious conclusion as Czechoslovak decision-makers were split on whether to adopt full market-reforms or to engage in a gradual reform which retained features of the socialist economy. The former position was personified by Klaus, the latter by Deputy Prime Minister Valtr Komárek. For a brief discussion, see Wheaton and Kavan, *Velvet Revolution*, pp. 162-3. Havel's position on economic reform is given in *Letní přemítání*, pp. 44-60, esp. p. 48.

¹¹¹ All of the Czechoslovaks interviewed regarding this issue were adamant that Čalfa had little to do with the Škoda deal and in general little responsibility for foreign investment. Nevertheless, he made this statement

de l'Expansion that one reason for his support for the bid for Škoda by Volkswagen over Renault-Volvo was 'that the Germans are our neighbours'.¹¹² German radio also reported Čalfa stating that German businesspeople knew the Czechoslovak mentality better than others.¹¹³ Even though previous business experience in Czechoslovakia may have given German investors an advantage in investing in Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovak officials such as Čalfa still encouraged German investors and seemed even to contribute to the sense of a preordained outcome.¹¹⁴

The German economic success can also be accorded to effort and strategy, rather than historical pattern. Germans, unlike other investors, seemed to approach the post-Communist Czechoslovak economy with vigour. When Kohl made official state visits to post-Communist Czechoslovakia he came with German business representatives. By contrast, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher visited Prague unaccompanied by British investors. In addition, she blamed the lack of British investment on the Czechoslovak government for having not created the appropriate conditions and told the leading Czech newspaper that no investment would be forthcoming until the features of the command economy had been dismantled entirely and firms could conduct business for themselves.¹¹⁵ The British had opportunities to become involved, and occasionally did so.¹¹⁶ The large British construction company

and it has been cited in numerous Western newspapers and studies, thereby contributed, perhaps incorrectly, to the notion of the inevitability of German economic dominance.

¹¹² Cited in Harry Hanak, 'Czechoslovak History in Great Britain', *Bohemia* Vol. 32, No. 1 (1991), p. 100.

¹¹³ Hamburg DPA, 27 November 1990, in *FBIS*, 29 November 1990, pp. 23-4.

¹¹⁴ *Handelsblatt*, 28 November 1990, in *FBIS*, 29 November 1990.

¹¹⁵ *Lidové noviny*, 18 September 1990.

¹¹⁶ For example, BREL signed a cooperation agreement with ČKD, the world's largest tram manufacturer. *The Financial Times*, 3 May 1990.

Bovis, responsible for such projects as Eurodisney, is chaired by Czech-born Frank Lampl. In July 1990 the company established a Czechoslovak subsidiary Bovis Czechoslovakia.¹¹⁷ The legacy of the command economy obviously did not deter other foreign investors from Czechoslovakia. Thus, economic success in the country must be at least partially attributable to initiative rather than systemic forces.

The Czechoslovak leadership responded to the German economic prowess. While most leading Czechoslovak officials declared that investment had to occur without political restraint,¹¹⁸ they also cautioned against overinvestment by one country. For example, Havel said 'Czechoslovakia should not pursue a policy of economic orientation to a single country. It has already learned a bitter lesson in this respect. And if a great, unified and developed Germany as our biggest neighbour substantially penetrates our market, then it should be continuously offset by intensifying economic relations with various other countries'.¹¹⁹

Even if it cannot be said that business pursues political interests, Czechoslovak representatives engaged in what can only be seen as a campaign to alert foreign business and political circles to the extent of German investment. A leading example of this was Klímová's warning cited earlier. It is remarkable that she made the statement as early as February 1990, before statistics on foreign investment and trade could really be offered. Dienstbier stated that if other countries were concerned about the German position in Czechoslovakia, they should invest

¹¹⁷ *The Financial Times*, 28-29 July 1990.

¹¹⁸ For example, Petr Pithart said of the Škoda deal, 'In this country matters were solved politically for too long. We cannot afford to do this; we had to opt for a clearly more economically advantageous offer'. *Christian Science Monitor*, 25-31 January 1991.

¹¹⁹ Cited in *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 September 1990.

themselves. Pithart, on a state visit to Canada, also noted foreign concern over the German presence.¹²⁰

The success of German business in Czechoslovakia had an effect on at least some prospective investing firms. For example, illustrative of this was the French response to their unsuccessful bid for Škoda. As the main Czechoslovak economic newspaper, *Hospodářské noviny*, wrote of the planned cooperation by the French food conglomerate BSN with Čokoladovný, the 'French take seriously their defeat in the contest for the Škoda car factory' and that the new move 'is a certain satisfaction for them'.¹²¹

While Germans led in the amount of investment, diversification nevertheless occurred. Despite its reports noting Czechoslovak regret of the paucity of British investment, the British media also reported that Czechoslovakia selected foreign aid and advice. *The Independent* commented that 'pragmatism can also be seen in the way Czechoslovakia selects what advice to take from where. For instance, the Prague authorities are going to Paris, not London, for suggestions on how to run a capital city'. A Czechoslovak official pronounced 'There is no shortage of advice. We pick and choose. France has been particularly helpful on banking matters, American on taxation....Britain is crucial in helping with privatisation'.¹²²

While diversification occurred, Germany's share of foreign investment also fell, so that in 1993, American foreign investment substantially exceed German, although the total volume of foreign investment fell.¹²³ In addition, even though Germany was the most

¹²⁰ RFE, *Report on Eastern Europe*, 19 July 1991, p. 45.

¹²¹ *Hospodářské noviny*, 23 April 1991.

¹²² *The Independent*, 17 September 1990.

¹²³ *Business Central Europe* (April 1994), p. 38.

prominent of Czechoslovakia's Western trading partners, its share was comparable to that of the Soviet Union.¹²⁴

Finally, it is conceivable that larger economic pressures might regulate against future German economic influence in the region. As the politicised trading structures of the Cold War recede and the former socialist economies integrate into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and sign agreements liberalising their trade with the European Community, Germany's opportunity to impose discriminatory or preferential trade policies on Central Europe will diminish.¹²⁵

Had this study strictly limited itself to 1992, it would have had to concur with the assessment that post-Communist Czechoslovakia was being Germanised. That conclusion, in turn, would support the contention, that once the 'unnatural' economic orientation of Czechoslovakia to the East had been broken after 1989, the country would be preordained to face German domination.

In fact, evidence suggests that these patterns are not necessarily predetermined and unalterable. Even if the cost and opportunity of rebuilding East Germany temporarily distracted German finance from Central Europe, the Czechoslovak leadership used the apparent threat of 'Germanisation' to spur other investors. The result was a diversification of foreign investment and ownership. The post-Communist Czechoslovak government deliberately undertook to open its borders to foreign influences, including and perhaps even foremost, economic ones.

This section argues that statements which suggested that post-Communist Czechoslovakia was being 'Germanised' were made without perspective of time or proper analytical context. It does not dispute that

¹²⁴ *Country Profile*, p. 32.

¹²⁵ Robert Mark Spaulding, Jr., 'German Trade Policy in Eastern Europe, 1890-1990: Preconditions for Applying International Trade Leverage', *International Organization* Vol. 54, No. 3 (Summer 1991), p. 368.

German finance succeeded better than any other Western competitor or that it had significant impact on Czechoslovak society. But it indicates that this process occurred in particular circumstances which may have temporarily favoured German business. The thesis therefore rejects the notion that the German economic dominance was the consequence of historical patterns. The thesis also acknowledges the irony that by opening the country's frontiers and seeking private capital, Czechoslovakia's civic foreign policy, provided the conditions suitable to German economic success. Nevertheless, Czechoslovak leaders must be considered successful in their subsequent use of the German economic position in Czechoslovakia to stimulate other investment and thereby hence the development of civil society.

That Havel's relations with Germany can be said to have begun even before he was President indicates the importance of that country to Czechoslovak history and post-Communist politics. The civic nature of his politics was manifest in this policy: politics could only be conducted on the basis of decency and morality and if a perceived historical injustice prevented that course, it had to be rectified.

There is little evidence to suggest that any other motivation lay behind the apology; certainly German policy towards Czechoslovakia manifested itself no differently as a result of the apology. The suggestion made by numerous observers that Havel made the apology to gain favour with Germany, particularly in terms of support for EC and NATO membership, is unsubstantiable for several reasons.

First, as will be discussed in chapter 7, for the first few months of post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy, there was confusion over which European institutions should continue, in what form and how they were to be interrelated. This is not to suggest that Havel ever believed

the EC would not continue to exist or that he discounted Czechoslovak membership. Certainly the Czechoslovak position on NATO evolved over time. The assertion of a plan to enter these organisations by appealing to German sentiment gives too much credit to a clear Czechoslovak position on European institutions. Nevertheless, the Treaty on Good Neighbourliness pledged German support for Czechoslovak entry into the EC.

Second, while the apology undoubtedly demonstrated the moral basis of Havel's politics, it was counterproductive both in domestic politics and in relations with Germany. The domestic strife that arose from the apology, and its legal extension in the Treaty, were substantial. It also called into question the extent to which public opinion, even if misguided, was deliberately ignored in the process. On the German side, the apology encouraged Sudeten German demands.

Third, there is little evidence to suggest that German policy towards Czechoslovakia would have differed greatly without the apology. This chapter suggested earlier that German officials believe their country to have a special role in and towards Central and Eastern Europe. Irrespective of its form, their involvement would therefore have continued, and all the more after the collapse of East European communism. Germany saw itself as Western Europe's frontline against instability emanating from the East. Therefore, Germany had at least as strong a desire as Poland or Czechoslovakia to stabilise Central Europe, and the logical way to do that was through the country's full integration in major European institutions.

CHAPTER 5

GEOPOLITICS, IDEALISM, THE SOVIET UNION AND THE WARSAW TREATY ORGANISATION

In the same way that Czechoslovakia's post-Communist leadership believed relations with Germany had to be made on a moral basis, so too did it view relations with the Soviet Union. Havel apologised to Germany for a perceived historical wrong. In relations with the Soviet Union, the apology was to Czechoslovakia for the invasion of 1968. Thereafter, the Czechoslovak leadership expected that relations with Moscow would be new and based on a code of morality and equality. Initially, as with Germany, geopolitical considerations in dealings with the Soviet Union were taken by Havel to be minimal.

While Havel expected that humanist values could aid relations with the Soviet Union, his government nevertheless was attentive to changes in Soviet domestic and foreign policy and constructed appropriate responses.

Soviet influence had constituted a major feature of Czechoslovak political life since 1948; it did not, however, rival the historical and organic significance of Germany. The extent of Soviet influence on post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy was determined by four legacies: institutional controls, strategic requirements, energy, and historical relations. The chapter considers how the post-Communist Czechoslovak leadership viewed the limitations that the Soviet Union might have imposed on Czechoslovakia's foreign policy, and Havel's efforts to extend humanist values to relations with the Soviet Union.

The chapter then examines the negotiations for Soviet troop withdrawals as an example of the ability of Czechoslovakia to achieve its objectives in its relations with the Soviet Union. The July 1990 oil crisis illustrated how the Czechoslovak leadership reacted to a potential

vulnerability. Czechoslovak-Soviet relations after the coup of August 1991 and the disintegration of the USSR are then briefly considered.

Finally, the chapter considers Czechoslovak policy towards the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) and how developments inside the Soviet Union resulted in Havel's government seeking the Organisation's disbandment.

THE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF CZECHOSLOVAK-SOVIET RELATIONS

The immense size of the Soviet Union alone meant that it could not be ignored by Central Europe. The end of Soviet dominance after the 1989 revolutions was as much the result of the Soviet inability to retain control of the region as of any initiatives arising from those countries. Nevertheless, Gorbachev allowed the Revolutions to occur. Not only did he open the parameters of debate in the socialist bloc, but he also denied the use of Soviet forces to crush protests in East Germany and Czechoslovakia.¹

But did Gorbachev's pre-Revolution policies give the post-Communist Czechoslovak government cause to view any differently the possibility of inherent Soviet strengths in the region? This section considers the extent to which Czechoslovak foreign policy decisions could be said to have been constrained by the Soviet Union in order to contextualise the post-Communist Czechoslovak leadership's initial minimisation of Soviet geopolitical influence over the country.

The Soviet Union of 1989 was very different from the one of 1991, with its vast size and immense natural and human resources still intact. While such attributes contributed to the projection of Soviet power into

¹ For literature on Gorbachev's role in the 1989 revolutions, see bibliography, part 7.

Eastern Europe, the limitations imposed on Czechoslovak foreign policy by the Soviet Union came more from constructed institutions than from an inexorable sense of being locked into conflict, as was Czechoslovakia's historical experience with Germany.

Institutional Controls

The Soviet Union possessed resources which, when combined with the historical opportunity provided at the end of the Second World War, furnished the basis for control of Central Europe. The Soviet Union, however, institutionalised its power. As Stalin revealed to Yugoslav Communist Milovan Djilas, 'This war is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes his own system as far as his army can reach'.²

The Soviet system was imposed in the East European countries by means of two reinforcing sets of structures. The first was the replication in each polity of the Soviet system of rule, characterised by the supremacy of the Communist Party and the practical control of the economy, media and instruments of coercion, minimising or even eliminating indigenous competition to Communist rule.³ The second set of structures were bilateral or multilateral links which sought to ensure Soviet dominance over the ideological, economic and security policies pursued by the East European regimes.⁴

The most visible form of Soviet control in Eastern Europe was the presence of its soldiers. At the time of the 1989 Revolutions, over 500,000 Soviet troops were deployed in East Germany, Hungary, Poland and

² Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962), p. 114.

³ See chapter 2.

⁴ See bibliography, part 3

Czechoslovakia, and control of key domestic apparatuses were widely believed to be held by the Soviets. East European military infrastructures were gradually converted to Soviet control, a process culminating in the establishment of the WTO in 1955.

As the West imposed a trade embargo on Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe in the later 1940s, the Soviet Union, 'using political pressure, succeeded in decreasing East-West trade to a trickle, and in diverting East European trade in an easterly direction'. The redirection of trade led to the establishment of the CMEA in 1949.⁵ After the Prague Spring, the CMEA became more attractive to Moscow as an instrument of control, since the Soviet leadership believed the institution to be 'an effective means of alliance management'.⁶

The engineering of economic relations within the Soviet bloc meant that after the 1989 Revolutions 'the Soviet Union was still a pervasive economic force in Eastern Europe'. In addition to the Soviet supply of energy, the Soviet Union was a substantial outlet market for East European agricultural produce and manufactured goods. Therefore, regardless of leadership perceptions, these factors should have been 'more than sufficient reasons for apprehension in Warsaw, Prague and Budapest'.⁷ Thus while size and resources allowed for Soviet power projection into Central Europe, control over Czechoslovakia was exerted more through institutions than geographic condition with the exception of energy. This is borne out by a discussion of Soviet perceptions of Czechoslovakia's strategic value and of historical relations.

⁵ Andrzej Korbonski, 'Detente, East-West Trade, and the Future of Economic Integration in Eastern Europe', *World Politics* Vol. XXVIII, No. 4 (July 1976), p. 572.

⁶ Peter Marsh, 'The Integration Process in Eastern Europe 1968 to 1975', *Journal of Common Market Studies* Vol. 14 No. 4 (June 1976), p. 315.

⁷ Rudolf L. Tökés, 'From the Visegrád to Kraków: Coup, Competition, and Coexistence', *Problems of Communism* Vol. XL, No. 6 (November-December 1991), pp. 106-07.

Strategic Value

All of Eastern Europe was strategically valuable to the Soviet Union after the Second World War. An overview of Western and Soviet literature suggests that East Germany was the greatest political prize of the Second World War and also, because of its forward position in the bloc, the most important strategic gain.⁸ Poland, however, has usually been considered even more important. Invaded often by or through Poland, Russia, and then the Soviet Union, wanted that territory to be politically trustworthy.

Czechoslovakia was also considered by the Soviet Union to be strategically important, but not to the same degree as Poland. Dawisha states categorically that Czechoslovakia had the same geopolitical importance to the Soviet Union as Poland, but later suggests that Poland alone held that privilege.⁹ Within the overall context of the Cold War and the structure of the Warsaw Pact, however, Czechoslovakia was significant. It bordered on the two Germanies, and it was the supply link between the three northern tier WTO countries as well as with Hungary of the southern tier.¹⁰ It did not have strategic value in its own right, however, as East Germany and Poland did; its importance was only relative to the Soviet Union's standing in the region as a whole.

In his *Pravda* explanation for the military action in 1968, Soviet Marshall Ivan S. Konev cited Bismarck's adage 'The Master of Bohemia is

⁸ For example, Christopher D. Jones, writes 'East Germany was always the key Soviet position in Europe'. 'Gorbachev and the Warsaw Pact,' *East European Politics and Societies* Vol. 3, No. 2 (1989), pp. 215-34.

⁹ Karen Dawisha, *Gorbachev, Eastern Europe and Reform* (2nd edn) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 25.

¹⁰ Christopher D. Jones, *Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe: Political Autonomy and the Warsaw Pact* (Brooklyn: Praeger, 1981); A. Ross Johnson, Robert W. Dean and Alexander Alexiev *East European Military Establishments: The Warsaw Pact Northern Tier* (New York: Crane Russak, 1982); and Volgyes, *Political Reliability*.

the Master of Europe'.¹¹ During the Prague Spring, reformist doctrine was altered to conform to 'geopolitical rather than ideological considerations',¹² suggesting that the Dubček government believed the Soviet Union to be more concerned with the country's location than with the danger of ideological revisionism spreading within the bloc. While strategic concerns certainly were a motivation for the intervention, they seem only secondary. Fear of allowing a competing form of socialism to take root in the bloc and its implications for various leaders and groups within the Soviet Union and the bloc as a whole are regularly cited as more important reasons for the invasion.¹³

Energy Supply

As shall be seen, the security and trading structures created by the Soviet Union in Central Europe did not prove inalterable legacies; the region's reliance on Soviet energy, however, was more enduring. While boasting areas of agricultural wealth, Central Europe generally lacks energy reserves of its own, and in particular has no significant oil and gas reserves.¹⁴ The only indigenous energy supply - other than Czechoslovakia's small uranium deposits - is lignite, expensive to extract and process, low in energy-yield, and now acknowledged as environmentally and medically harmful. The Soviet Union was of course

¹¹ *Pravda*, 23 August 1968, cited in Josef Kalvoda, *Czechoslovakia in Soviet Strategy* (Washington: University Press of America, 1979), p. 1.

¹² Johnson, *et al*, *East European Military*, p. 118.

¹³ Skilling, *Interrupted Revolution*. Ideological concerns are also given priority in Karen Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). For the implications of ideological diversity, see especially Valenta, *Soviet Intervention*; and Hodnett and Potichnyj, *Ukraine and the Czechoslovak Crisis*.

¹⁴ Poland and Romania have small amounts of their own energy supplies. Korbonski, 'Detente', p. 573.

Czechoslovakia's largest trading partner and of Soviet exports to Czechoslovakia in 1984, seventy-eight percent was raw materials and energy. The Czechoslovak economic programme for 1986-90, which aimed to redirect slightly the country's predominant trading relationship with CMEA countries, still envisioned the USSR furnishing all of Czechoslovakia's crude oil, natural gas, ammonia and methanol.¹⁵ In the year of the Velvet Revolution, the Soviet Union supplied Czechoslovakia with over half of its energy and raw materials.¹⁶

The distribution of resources meant that political freedom did not release Czechoslovakia from dependence on the Soviet Union. In the 1980s, the East European countries, with possible indirect encouragement from Moscow, sought oil from outside the bloc,¹⁷ with the consequence that they became vulnerable to fluctuations in the world market or to political developments in oil-producing regions. This was demonstrated in 1990 when, save Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia was the most adversely affected among former Soviet satellites by changes in world oil prices resulting from the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. With oil priced at \$30 per barrel, almost all Czechoslovakia's hard currency earnings would have been depleted buying subsistence quantities of oil on the open market. Czechoslovakia stood to lose £2 billion in loans, credits and delivered goods to Iraq with the onset of sanctions and the Gulf War.¹⁸ With

¹⁵ Carl H. McMillan, 'Soviet Efforts to Restructure the CMEA: The Case of Regional Energy Relations', in Aurel Braun (ed.), *The Soviet-East European Relationship in the Gorbachev Era* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), pp. 26-46; and *Planované hospodářství*, 2 (1986), pp. 43-8, in *JPRS-EER*, 29 May 1986, cited in Wolchik, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 262.

¹⁶ 'Report of the Federal Statistical Office on Socioeconomic Development in 1989', *Statistika*, 4 (April 4, 1990), in *JPRS-EER*, 15 June 1990, cited in Wolchik, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 262.

¹⁷ McMillan, 'Soviet Efforts'.

¹⁸ Peter Martin, 'The Oil Crisis and Prospects for Foreign Trade', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 35 (31 August 1990), pp. 6-9; and Marvin Jackson, 'The Impact of the Gulf Crisis on the Economies of Eastern Europe', *ibid.*, pp. 40-45.

respect to energy supply, geographic circumstances made Czechoslovakia dependent on the Soviet Union. Political contingencies served to exacerbate that relationship.

Historical Relations

Although the Soviet Union itself possessed such latent power, its historical influence over Czechoslovakia was limited. Unlike in its relations with Germany which, as was argued in chapter 4, actually shaped the Czechoslovak identity, Russia and the Soviet Union have played a relatively small role in the country's development. Of all the Slavs, Russians have had the least contact with Czechs and Slovaks.¹⁹

Karel Kramář, co-founder of the Czechoslovak state, believed that the country owed its existence to Russia. His National Democratic Party maintained that as a Slavonic state Czechoslovakia was naturally to tend toward Russia and Czechoslovakia was to base its foreign policy on Russia (albeit non-Bolshevik) and not on the League of Nations (a position at odds with Masaryk and Beneš).²⁰

Despite his importance in pre- and early-Czechoslovak history, Kramář's view on Czechoslovakia's ties and obligations to Russia was in the minority. Masaryk's study of Russian thinking was regarded as the most authoritative in the West to the 1940s, an interest which contributed to the establishment of premier research facilities in Prague in the interwar years. However, Czechoslovak state-sponsored research on Russia was secondary to research on Slavs as a whole, with concentration on

¹⁹ Dawisha, *Eastern Europe*, p. 12.

²⁰ Hans Lemberg, 'Masaryk and the Russian Question against the Background of German and Czech Attitudes to Russia,' in Stanley B. Winters (ed.), *T.G. Masaryk (1850-1937) Volume 1 Thinker and Politician* Basingstoke and London: Macmillan in association with the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London), p. 293.

West and South Slavs.²¹ Pre-Communist Czechoslovakia's experience with the Soviet Union was generally positive, particularly in contrast to that of Poland.²²

Only insofar as the Soviet Union was able to maintain institutional control over Czechoslovakia did it have an impact. The only non-institutional control it possessed was energy; other forms of control - trade, military presence, international organisations - had little historical legacy. Being constructed, they could be, and were, eventually dismantled. Even in cultural relations, where Havel, perhaps as a manifestation of his humanist vision of relations, said that Russian culture had an important part to play in contemporary Czechoslovak society, Russian presence, let alone 'influence', disappeared.²³ Objectively, it would seem that Czechoslovakia had few inexorable links to the Soviet Union. Did the perception of the post-Communist Czechoslovak leadership concur with objective reality?

CIVIC RELATIONS AND GEOPOLITICS IN POST-COMMUNIST CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S APPROACH TO THE SOVIET UNION

Since Soviet influence over Czechoslovakia was largely based on constructed control mechanisms rather than geographic contingencies, it is not surprising to find that the post-Communist Czechoslovak leadership discounted, at least initially, Soviet 'influence'.

This view, however, did not come as much from a geopolitical calculation of Soviet power in Central Europe as from the Czechoslovak dissident belief in humanist values. Despite the animosity Czechoslovaks

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 287 and 295.

²² For a brief comparison, see Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity* (2nd edn) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 89.

²³ Fawn, 'Central Europe', pp. 73-4.

may have felt towards the USSR for the 1968 military intervention, the Czechoslovak leadership sought to include the Soviet Union in the family of democratic, European nations.

Havel seemed satisfied that once Moscow had apologised in December 1989 for the 1968 intervention, relations between the two countries would be equal. Dienstbier concurred in a New Year's address, stating that Czechoslovak and Soviet foreign policies had become 'much closer' than they had been and affirmed that 'the current Soviet policy acknowledges and respects Czechoslovak independence and sovereignty'.²⁴ While Havel said that the invasion would still be remembered, it was 'becoming history' and 'would no longer dominate life'. He called on both countries to look to 'a joint future'.²⁵

As evidence of such thinking, Havel made personal overtures to Gorbachev. When they met in Moscow in February 1990, Havel produced a peacepipe given to him by native Americans. He suggested that the two men smoke from it. Havel's symbolic and personal overture failed, however, when Gorbachev said that he did not smoke. At the very least, as Saša Vondra recounted, this showed that Gorbachev had no sense of humour.²⁶ It also demonstrated that, in order to be effective, Havel's values had to be shared by the interlocutor.

Havel was therefore cautious in assessing to what extent his humanist values were present in Czechoslovak-Soviet relations. In March 1990, he compared them to those in an enterprise, in which 'equal and friendly relations hardly ever develop between the boss and his employees'. But his idealism was visible in his belief that their prior

²⁴ Prague International Service, 1 January 1990, in *FBIS*, 2 January 1990.

²⁵ *Die Welt*, 10 March 1990, in *FBIS*, 12 March 1990.

²⁶ I am grateful to Saša Vondra for sharing this anecdote. Interview, September 1994.

relations had changed, and that the two countries had become 'equal partners'.²⁷

For all the Czechoslovak leadership's efforts to extend humanist values to relations with the Soviet Union, it was also cautious. The Czechoslovak leadership believed that totalitarianism would not be defeated until all of its features were removed. While Czechoslovak dissidents recognised Gorbachev's role in permitting the 1989 revolutions, they were also conscious that, regardless of his personal intentions, he was forced to operate within the confines of the Soviet regime.

The Czechoslovak leadership showed itself capable of responding to the Soviet Union in at least two ways. The first was symbolic, in keeping with dissident practice. Havel emphasised civic solidarity and made implicit reference to historical wrongs. During his visit to Moscow, he proposed an exchange of parliamentary delegations, including Dubček, as if to reverse the humiliation of his previous, humiliating visits to Moscow. Havel praised deceased Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov,²⁸ placed flowers on his tomb and met with his wife Elena Bonner. Sakharov and Bonner had both supported Czechoslovak dissidents during Communism. Havel invited Bonner and other Soviet dissidents to Wenceslas Square for ceremonies marking the crushing of the Prague Spring.²⁹ In Prague, he attended a ceremony changing the name of Red Army Square, where Soviet liberators of Prague were apparently buried (even though no Soviet soldiers are known to have died in the operation) to Jan Palach Square, honouring the philosophy student's self-immolation in January 1969.³⁰

²⁷ *Die Welt*, 10 March 1990, in *FBIS*, 12 March 1990.

²⁸ *International Herald Tribune*, 28 February 1990.

²⁹ *Le Monde*, 1 March 1990.

³⁰ *The Times*, 17 January 1990.

Havel appointed Rudolf Slánský as ambassador to the Soviet Union. Slánský's father was the leading victim of the Stalinist show trials in Czechoslovakia. Havel called the appointment 'exactly in my symbolic and metaphoric way of political thinking'.³¹

The second feature of Havel's policy towards the Soviet Union was practical, seeking the elimination of remaining Soviet mechanisms of interference, foremost the Soviet garrisons based in Czechoslovakia. The new leadership expressed with understatement these objectives in the foreign policy section of Civic Forum's 25 November 7-point plan: 'Maintaining our sovereignty as a state, we nevertheless wish to revise agreements that were inspired by the unreasonable ambitions of the leading representatives of the state'.³² Not naming the Soviet Union explicitly for the 'agreements' which Civic Forum wanted revised - namely, stationing Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia - and instead blaming indigenous Communists,³³ was part of Havel's humanist and conciliatory approach to Moscow. His view of the Soviet Union was loosely similar to his need to redefine Czechoslovak-German relations with an admission of Czech guilt. The idea of extending a form of justice to the Soviet Union, especially by including it in the European family of nations, and the belief that factors of power politics would not inhibit this, constituted important elements of Havel's and Dienstbier's programme. One motivation for their attitude may have been Gorbachev's policies.

³¹ *International Herald Tribune*, 14 February 1990. Dienstbier, however, denied that there was any symbolic value. See Rick Fawn, 'Symbolism in the Diplomacy of Czechoslovak President Václav Havel', Paper presented to the 20th Annual BISA Conference, University of Southampton, 18-20 December 1995, p. 6.

³² See the original reproduced in Bradley, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution*.

³³ This can be an extension of Havel's emphasis on personal responsibility. Chapter 2 considered, for example, how Havel felt that Dubček accepted insufficient responsibility for the 1968 outcome.

The Legacy of Gorbachev's East European Policy on Post-1989 Czechoslovak Foreign Policy

The arrival of a new head of the Politburo in March 1985 signalled the potential for policy change. Of a different generation, trained as a lawyer, and seen as the acolyte of the prototype reformer Andropov, Gorbachev's views on Eastern Europe suggested the start of a new policy line. He pre-empted speculation in an important earlier speech in which he considered the strengthening of bloc relations to be his first commandment.³⁴

Nevertheless, by 1987 and 1988, Gorbachev had indicated that individual socialist states both could and had to confront their own particular problems in a 'national' way. Czechoslovak dissidents remained sceptical of Gorbachev. For example, towards the end of this period, Jaroslav Šabata figuratively challenged Gorbachev:

Before anything else can happen, the Soviets must withdraw their troops from East Germany as well as from other [socialist bloc] countries. It is necessary to understand this step as an act desired to pave the way for structural political change. After all, the Soviet Union keeps nineteen divisions in East Germany. The disastrous political state of Central Europe is common knowledge. Is this not a situation which calls for a unilateral initiative from the East?³⁵

While Gorbachev may not have enacted policies that satisfied Šabata, he permitted the 1989 revolutions. Three weeks before the Velvet Revolution, Soviet policy explicitly replaced the restrictive Brezhnev Doctrine with the 'Sinatra Doctrine', allowing each country to pursue its

³⁴ *Pravda*, 15 March 1985. Debate rightly surrounds Gorbachev's intentions towards Eastern Europe. See, bibliography, part 3 for works on Soviet-East European relations under Gorbachev.

For a categorisation of how Gorbachev's policies towards Eastern Europe evolved, see Alex Pravda, 'Soviet Policy Towards Eastern Europe in Transition', in Alex Pravda (ed.), *The End of Outer Empire: Soviet-East European Relations in Transition, 1985-90* (London: Sage for RIIA, 1992), pp. 1-34.

³⁵ Šabata, 'New Form of Detente', p. 99.

own path.³⁶ Soviet complicity in the Velvet Revolution may have been subtly symbolised by the laying of a wreath by two uniformed Soviet soldiers at the site of the police clubbings of student protestors along National Boulevard.³⁷

In the face of the 1989 Revolutions, the Soviet leadership faced two options. The first would have involved hostile responses in rhetoric and possibly in action; the second would have been general acceptance. Probably the most liberal of the Soviet leaders, Shevardnadze defended the events in Eastern Europe.³⁸ He referred to 'common human ideas of equality, freedom, people's power and democracy' and denounced the use and futility of violence, as demonstrated in Afghanistan.³⁹ Shevardnadze may have been too atypical of the Soviet leadership to reassure Czechoslovak officials. For at least the first half of 1990 they suspected Soviet meddling in domestic affairs, and even of a KGB coup against Havel.

For example, in mid-May 1990, three weeks before the first fully-contested parliamentary elections, Civic Forum warned of a 'pre-election smear campaign aimed at discrediting the political system' including even Havel. Jan Urban blamed the StB and suggested that it was aided by the KGB.⁴⁰ Even as late as September 1990, Deputy Interior Minister Ruml said that the KGB continued to operate in Czechoslovakia through

³⁶ *The Times*, 26 October 1989. (Sinatra's song 'I did it my way' also refers to the 'final curtain').

³⁷ Interpretations of the significance are from students.

One theory suggested that the Soviet Union engineered the Revolution and sought to place a reformist Communist in power, probably Gorbachev's University friend Zdeněk Mlynář. A Czechoslovak Parliamentary Commission discounted the scenario. See Jan Obrman, 'November 17, 1989 - Attempted Coup or the Start of a Popular Revolution?', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 27 (6 July 1990), pp. 4-10.

³⁸ *Pravda*, 'Soviet Policy', p. 29.

³⁹ *Pravda*, 26 June 1990.

⁴⁰ *The Independent*, 19 May 1990.

Czechoslovak citizens in locations from where Soviet troops were being withdrawn.⁴¹ Nevertheless, such suspicions rested on the residue of institutional connections and on certain Czechoslovaks, rather than on any interpretation by the leadership of limitations imposed on their freedom of action by any organic Soviet geopolitical influence.

Whatever the role Gorbachev's policy toward Eastern Europe placed in shaping the Czechoslovak leadership's view of the Soviet Union, its benign perception of that country could have been motivated by three other possible reasons, two 'idealist', and the third strictly practical.

One was the nature of the dissidents. They had endured conditions that the rest of the population, especially the apparently passive but self-preserving Czechoslovaks, simply accepted despite moral and other costs. Thus, the seemingly impossible was possible. Havel's 'The Power of the Powerless', the banner of the dissident movement, marked the requisites and possibilities for the underdog, at least in terms of 'truth', to triumph. In the sense that elements of power do not stand in the way of the dissidents's aim of achieving universal values of truth and equality, these considerations can be called 'idealist'.

The second reason is, in his dealings with Germany, Havel was motivated by the belief that countries behave on the basis of universal codes of decency. As shown earlier, such a policy did not prevent Havel from observing the injustice of Soviet actions.

Once the Soviet Union had apologised for its 1968 invasion, Havel seemed satisfied. Again, as in the case of Germany, what objective power the Soviet Union had did not detract from Havel's desire to include the Soviet Union in the family of nations. It could be argued that the very recognition of the Soviet Union's strengths prompted Havel to come to its aid: in his visit to Washington in February 1990, he explained that the

⁴¹ *Le Monde*, 21 September 1990.

best way to help Central Europe was in fact to help the Soviet Union.⁴² Even if this were a policy calculated to benefit Czechoslovakia, its indirect nature had some Czechoslovak officials privately calling it 'stupid'.⁴³ Havel altered his views as Czechoslovak-Soviet relations developed, deeming certain Soviet actions suspicious or acknowledging that he did not realise some internal pressures facing the Soviet leadership and how they would reflect in Soviet foreign policy. Nevertheless, it seems that the foremost aim was to extend humanist principles to the conduct of relations with the Soviet Union. This very practice deemed factors of geography to be largely inconsequential.

The Czechoslovak leadership was also motivated by practical reasons to consider the Soviet Union as an equal. It would have been self-defeating for Havel to consider Czechoslovakia to be inherently and inalterably weaker than the Soviet Union. Some policies were deemed necessary to the survival of the Czechoslovak state, principally the withdrawal of Soviet forces,⁴⁴ and if the Czechoslovak leadership interpreted Soviet influence as imposing such restrictions on its policy options then no policy would have been attempted at all. One example of the temporary nature of Soviet influence on the region can be found in how trade patterns changed.

The End of Soviet Bloc Trade and the CMEA

The experience of the 1989 Revolutions demonstrated how ephemeral the institutional links had been. This was not surprising, given that Czechoslovakia's economic development prior to the Communist takeover

⁴² See chapter 7.

⁴³ Background interview with Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry official.

⁴⁴ Text of the Civic Forum Programme, annex, in Bradley, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution*.

had always been linked to its Western neighbours, with limited economic links to the East. This was partly a function of Czechoslovakia having been part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, but also because of the thousand-year socio-economic co-existence between the Germans and the Czechs.⁴⁵

Unlike in other policy areas relating to the Soviet bloc, such as the Warsaw Pact from which Hungary immediately sought unilateral withdrawal, Czechoslovakia took the first lead in seeking the dismantling of a bloc organisation: the CMEA.⁴⁶ Already in early January 1990, Finance Minister Václav Klaus announced that his country would propose the termination of the CMEA and he threatened unilateral withdrawal if refused.⁴⁷

The disbandment of the CMEA cannot necessarily be seen as an achievement of Czechoslovak foreign policy, even though it coincided with Klaus's intentions. He acknowledged that 'It was not us but the Soviets who brought about the quick end of the CMEA' when they proposed a conversion to hard currency accounting.⁴⁸ This occurred at the first post-Revolution meeting of the CMEA, convened in Sofia on 9-10 January 1990, when Soviet Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov proposed that bloc trade be converted immediately into hard currency. Other governments sought a gradual conversion occurring over several years. Czechoslovakia, by

⁴⁵ For specific examples of Bohemian economic links to Western Europe, as well as West European - including even British - economic involvement in Bohemia, see John Komlos, (ed.), *Economic Development in the Habsburg Monarchy and in the Successor States* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1990).

⁴⁶ This is attributable to Klaus's economic foreign policy, discussed in chapter 2.

⁴⁷ The Poles initially refused to support Czechoslovakia, and the Hungarian Foreign Minister, called not for the CMEA's dissolution, but its 'total overhaul'. Tamás Bauer, 'Economic Reforms and Bloc Integration', in Weilmann, *et al.* p. 55.

⁴⁸ *Der Spiegel*, 22 April 1991, in *JPRS-EER*, 3 May 1991, p. 33.

contrast, was 'radical', wanting a range of changes including trade decentralisation.⁴⁹

Even before its official termination, the CMEA ceased functioning.⁵⁰ By mutual agreement on 1 January 1991 the four countries adopted the dollar as their trading unit. Whatever control CMEA had exerted, the currency changeover buried the organisation. The fact that trade between Central Europe and the Soviet Union had decreased significantly after 1989, and especially after the CMEA, demonstrated that the trade was not 'natural'. While the termination of the CMEA had 'damaging consequences' for the East European economies,⁵¹ the effect was short-lived, suggesting that there was nothing 'natural' propelling that Soviet bloc trade in the first place.

The Central European countries began developing relations with individual Soviet republics, to the extent that 'relations with eastern neighbours subsequently proved equally or even more important to Central European governments than did relations with Russia'.⁵² This trend continued as Soviet reductions of oil deliveries underscored the need to establish separate relations with other Republics and autonomous regions of the Russian Federation.

It was in the context of revolutionary euphoria, when Communist Czechoslovakia's hardline regime was upended not by violence but by flowers and jingled keys, that the new leadership sought to undertake

⁴⁹ RFE, *Report on Eastern Europe*, 26 January 1990, p. 56.

⁵⁰ On 28 June 1991, the CMEA held its forty-sixth and last meeting in Budapest. Members agreed to end the CMEA at its forth-sixth meeting on 28 June 1991. A liquidation committee was given ninety days to dispense with CMEA property. Vladimir V. Kusin, 'CMEA: The End is Nigh', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 2, No. 5 (1 February 1991), pp. 38-40; and Nicholas Denton, 'Comecon Put Out of Misery After 42 Years', *The Financial Times*, 29 June 1991.

⁵¹ Jan Zielonka, *Security in Central Europe* (London: IISS Adelphi Paper No. 272, Autumn 1992), p. 39.

⁵² *Ibid.*

perhaps its most important foreign policy venture: the removal of the Soviet military presence.

DEALING WITH THE SOVIET UNION

Post-Communist Czechoslovakia's ability to deal with Soviet Union was challenged quickly after the Revolution when Havel made clear that Czechoslovak sovereignty could only be ensured by the withdrawal of Soviet forces. The eventual negotiations for a Soviet troop withdrawal deserve study not only because they are viewed as one, or even the, major success of Havel's foreign policy. They are also significant as a test of Czechoslovakia's aptitude for achieving goals in relations with a larger power.

Negotiations for Soviet Troop Withdrawals

75,000 Soviet military personnel were stationed on Czechoslovak territory on the basis of the 16 October 1968 Treaty on the Conditions for a Temporary Stay of Soviet Forces on Czechoslovak Territory, signed in the aftermath of the WTO intervention. Czechoslovaks redefined the Soviet euphemism of 'temporary' as meaning 'eternity minus one day'.

While the negotiations can be considered a success for Czechoslovak foreign policy, it cannot be attributed to humanist values in Czechoslovak-Soviet relations. Instead, it resulted from cost-benefit analysis by both parties.

Czechoslovakia had no hesitation in seeking a Soviet military withdrawal. Even while the Communists still held a majority in the government, Czechoslovakia requested negotiations at the WTO meeting in Moscow on 4 December 1989. Dienstbier's first act as Foreign Minister was to seek negotiations on Soviet troop withdrawals. The Soviet Foreign

Ministry announced that talks would begin in Prague on 15 January 1990. Thus while replying, the Soviet Union was nevertheless attempting to set the date, time and place, if not also the agenda, of the negotiations talks.⁵³

On 15 January 1990 the Deputy Foreign Ministers of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia opened withdrawal negotiations in Prague. That first meeting ended the next day without success and the next round was set for February.⁵⁴ As the talks to begin negotiations, and then the negotiations themselves began, popular pressure exerted itself on the Czechoslovak (and conceivably also on the Soviet) government. On the eve of talks some six thousand protestors in central Czechoslovakia demanded the withdrawal of Soviet forces from that military district.⁵⁵ On 24 January 1990 thousands of young Czechoslovaks demonstrated for a complete withdrawal of Soviet troops (as well as for changes on the law on military service.)⁵⁶ Five days later over 20,000 protestors demonstrated outside a Soviet military base in the Moravian city of Olomouc, and gave the base commander a petition requesting the withdrawal of the 20,000 Soviet personnel in the region. ČTK reported that the base commander said that those troops were 'no longer in a state of military readiness and were preparing for their departure'.⁵⁷

Attempts were made to encourage public support for withdrawal. Prague Domestic Service announced a rally would be held on 6 February in the Old Town Square to back the Czechoslovak Government 'at

⁵³ *Le Monde*, 14-15 January 1990.

⁵⁴ RFE, *Report on Eastern Europe*, 2 February 1990, p. 54.

⁵⁵ *FT*, 15 January 1990.

⁵⁶ RFE, *Report on Eastern Europe*, 9 February 1990, p. 45.

⁵⁷ *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 January 1990.

achieving a speedy withdrawal of the Soviet troops from our territory'.⁵⁸

The next day, a reporter from ČTK was shown the Soviet military base at Milovice. A Soviet spokesman said that the treaty allowing Soviet troops on Czechoslovak soil had not yet been altered, and the CSFR had only put forth amendments. He also asserted that the cost of maintaining the Soviet forces was borne entirely by the Soviet Government, a view discounted by the Czechoslovaks.⁵⁹

Czechoslovak government radio, claiming to be 'in harmony with the prevailing opinion of the Czechoslovak public', asked why, if the Soviet army arrived in one day, it needed so long to withdraw.⁶⁰ Far from the public forgiving the Soviet Union, the Czechoslovaks had become unreasonable.

Even though as early as 19 January 1990 the talks were said by Western media to have led 'in principle to total withdrawal,' nevertheless Czechoslovak sources complained of Soviet delays and intimated that Moscow might seek to maintain a division in Czechoslovakia to limit the speed of the transformation.⁶¹ To the Polish Parliament on 26 January 1990, Havel said that he hoped that the Soviet Union would begin its military withdrawal in the interest of good relations with Central Europe.⁶²

Even so, the planned 2 February talks in Moscow were postponed, indicating that negotiations had run into difficulties. Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry spokesman Luboš Dobrovský said that the Soviet armed forces newspaper *Krasnaya zvezda* claimed that military threats to Czechoslovakia

⁵⁸ PDS, 31 January 1991, in *FBIS*, 1 February 1991.

⁵⁹ See below.

⁶⁰ PDS, 1 February 1990, in *FBIS*, 1 February 1990.

⁶¹ *International Herald Tribune*, 19 January 1990.

⁶² 'Havel Asks Coordinated Bid By East to 'Return to Europe,'" *International Herald Tribune*, 26 January 1990. 218

still existed and that its leaders were seeking a premature withdrawal of Soviet forces. The Czechoslovak government was still pursuing the acceptance of the proposal before the first full elections in June 1990.⁶³

Once a second round of negotiations was held on 7 February 1990. It dealt with deadlines for troop withdrawals; Czechoslovakia wanted the departure completed by the end of the 1990, giving the Soviet under 12 months; the Soviets wanted as much 24 months.⁶⁴ That round of negotiations was interpreted by the Czechoslovak media to constitute something of a victory. While the Soviet Union commenced its military departure, the date for completion of the withdrawal had still not been agreed.⁶⁵ One newspaper wrote suggested that the early withdrawal of 10,000 soldiers was a result of the negotiations, but Western military observers said that the unit was to be removed as part of Gorbachev's previously announced withdrawals from Eastern Europe. While the problem of housing for returning Soviet troops was acknowledged, another factor in the agreement was that each of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union aimed to avert 'anti-Soviet sentiment boiling over into public disorder'.⁶⁶ The Soviet Union was influenced by events in Czechoslovakia, and this, in turn, suggests that the Czechoslovaks were aware of the limitations of Soviet influence over them.

Gorbachev made a 'personal appeal' to Havel on 13 February 1990, after which Havel acknowledged 'there were aspects [of Soviet politics] I was not aware of previously' and relaxed his demand for completion of

⁶³ See Gerard Davies, 'Hitch in Czech Withdrawal', *The Guardian*, 1 February 1990.

⁶⁴ RFE, *Report on Eastern Europe*, 23 February 90, p. 53

⁶⁵ For a summary, see RFE, *Report on Eastern Europe*, 23 February 1990, p. 53

⁶⁶ *Independent*, 26 February 1990.

the withdrawal within the year. At the same time, however, public pressure and disclosures of Soviet environmental damage forced the Czechoslovak government to remain firm in the negotiations.⁶⁷ Havel thus demanded an even tighter deadline from Gorbachev, wanting the final five main Soviet combat divisions to leave within a year. Havel reported that Gorbachev 'did not rule this out if it proved feasible'. Havel said he 'listened with understanding to the other side,' and added that any withdrawal schedule 'should not be too short'.⁶⁸ On a practical note, Havel offer to send prefabricated housing for the returning Soviet soldiers. Despite, and not because of these concessions, *Le Monde* nevertheless called him and Dienstbier 'very determined' to achieve the removal of this 'army of occupation', but cognizant of the practical problems that Gorbachev was facing.⁶⁹

The Soviet Union had an interest in being conciliatory toward the Central European nations. The risk of losing Western public opinion was a likely factor in Moscow's behaviour. So, too, was the fear that Central Europe would either be prompted to create a security alliance of its own, or, still worse, align with NATO against the Soviet Union. The determination of the Czechoslovak leadership in seeking negotiations demonstrated not only its urgency to eliminate a mechanism of Soviet interference, but also that it perceived the aim as achievable. The process of withdrawal largely vindicates the Czechoslovak view that, in foreign policy, existing structures did not necessarily predetermine outcomes.

⁶⁷ *Independent*, 14 February 1990.

⁶⁸ *International Herald Tribune*, 27 February 1990.

⁶⁹ *Le Monde*, 28 February. 1990.

The Process of Withdrawal

Despite problems in the negotiations, which proceeded relatively smoothly in view of many potential sources of disagreement, the withdrawal was concluded earlier than dictated by the agreement.

The withdrawal was agreed to occur in three stages: from 26 February 1990 to 31 May 1990 26,000 soldiers, 551 main battles tanks, 859 armoured vehicles, 92 attack helicopters and 19 military aircraft were to be withdrawn, predominantly from Moravian bases. Second, from 1 June to the end of that year, the 30,000 troops, 516 tanks, 1,362 armoured vehicles, 60 attack helicopters and 43 aircraft stationed in Slovakia would be removed. The third stage was scheduled to end on 30 June 1991, after the withdrawal of a final 19,000 soldiers, 153 tanks, 284 armoured vehicles, 21 attack helicopters, and 41 aircraft.

On 25 March 1991 the Soviet media carried reports from Vorobev that the Soviet troop withdrawal from Czechoslovakia would be completed by May 20, more than a month ahead of schedule. At the same time, the Soviet commander also announced that Czechoslovakia was free of all Soviet ammunition, conventional and nuclear.⁷⁰

As soon as the withdrawal schedule began on 26 February 1990, two trainloads of Soviet military equipment and personnel left the country. From then on, the process advanced smoothly, with only two incidents being held against the Soviet Union. The first was the 19 January 1991 explosion of a Soviet tank as it was being readied for withdrawal. The incident resulted in 17 Soviet deaths but no Czechoslovak casualties.

⁷⁰ RFE, *Report on Eastern Europe*, 5 April 1991, p. 27.

Thereafter, armour was transported without ammunition, which was sent in special vehicles.⁷¹

Another issue that alarmed Czechoslovaks was the sale of Soviet small arms and explosives. One episode involved a teenage boy swapping his digital watch for a live grenade.⁷² Soviet Commander Vorobev insisted that such incidents could not have occurred.⁷³ To support the Soviets, Czechoslovakia's chief negotiator in the withdrawal talks, rock star Michal Kocáb, rightly said that such problems were universal (in Eastern Europe) and that the situation was no worse in Czechoslovakia, and lauded the behaviour of departing Soviet personnel.⁷⁴ By 25 June Soviet forces had been completely withdrawn from Czechoslovakia. Vorobev, like his counterpart in Afghanistan, was the last Soviet soldier to depart from Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovaks marked the occasion with a rock concert, attended by Havel and in which Kocáb performed.

Some issues in Soviet-Czechoslovak relations, however, were not settled, and some of Czechoslovakia's demands went unmet.

Outstanding Issues from the Withdrawal

Environmental Damage and Financial Compensation

Foremost among these issues was the environmental damage produced by the Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia. The physical presence of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia was substantial. 195 square kilometres of land,

⁷¹ Radio Czechoslovakia, 17 January 1991, cited in Jan Obrman, 'Withdrawal of Soviet Troops Completed', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 2, No. 30 (26 July 1991).

⁷² *Mlada fronta dnes*, 22 January 1991.

⁷³ Czechoslovak Television, 25 January 1991, cited in Obrman, 'Withdrawal'.

⁷⁴ ČTK, June 19, 1991, cited in *ibid*.

130 square kilometres of soil and 65 square kilometres of forest were under their direct control.⁷⁵

A bilateral commission was created in May 1990 to investigate the status of areas used by Soviet forces. In addition, Kocáb's commission for the withdrawal also considered the environmental damage caused by the Soviets. Czechoslovaks accused the Soviets of impeding the effectiveness of the commission and Kocáb stated 'sometimes [the Soviet side] threatened us, though never openly, by referring to our dependence on its oil and trade'.⁷⁶

The extent of environmental damage in some locations was so severe that Czech Prime Minister Petr Pithart said it was as if 'the Soviets forces had declared chemical warfare on us'.⁷⁷

A delegation from the Supreme Soviet consented to come to Prague in January 1991 to consider Czechoslovakia's claim. Instead, it demanded compensation of between 4 and 5 billion crowns from Czechoslovakia for facilities their military was leaving behind.⁷⁸ The mayor of the city of Turnov, one of the main Soviet sites, retorted that the Soviets ought to have taken the crumbling buildings with them.⁷⁹ The Czechoslovak negotiator on compensation, Major General Rudolf Ducháček, estimated Soviet infrastructure at a third of the Soviet estimate, and noted the ecological damage and the Soviet use of Czechoslovak infrastructure.⁸⁰ ČSFR Deputy Environment Minister Václav Vucka called the Soviet estimate

⁷⁵ ČTK, 1 February 1991, cited in *ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷⁶ *The Guardian*, 20 June 1991.

⁷⁷ *The Independent*, 12 May 1990.

⁷⁸ ČTK, 11 January 1991, cited in Obrman, 'Withdrawal', p. 17.

⁷⁹ *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 14 February 1991, cited in *ibid.*, p. 17.

⁸⁰ *Rudé právo*, 4 July 1991.

of 2,500 million crowns (\$83.3m) for environmental damage insufficient.⁸¹ The Soviet Union finally agreed on 290 million crowns compensation for buildings damaged by its forces, but the Czechslovaks considered that amount inadequate as well.⁸² On 13 June 1991, the Czechoslovak government announced acceptance of a draft agreement with Moscow on compensation for damage done by Soviet forces, but which did not include environmental damage.⁸³ The Soviet Union probably could not have afforded to pay the total compensation. Nevertheless, the evident environmental damage caused by Soviet forces, as well as their attitude to compensation, must have added to a sense among Czechoslovaks of national abuse. Havel's conciliatory approach toward the Soviet Union was sullied by the fact that the Soviet Union was not taking responsibility for its wrongdoings. However, Czechoslovakia had failed in its objective of receiving payment from the Soviet Union.

*International Front Organisations*⁸⁴

Another outstanding issue in Czechoslovakia's relations with the Soviet Union concerned more than a dozen international communist organisations established in Prague.

Czechoslovak public opinion sought the expulsion of the organisations as symbols of international Communism and for their transgressions against Czechoslovakia.⁸⁵ The Czechoslovak government concurred but in April 1991 reversed itself because the organisations had

⁸¹ ČTK, 26 June 1991, in *FBIS*, 2 July 1991.

⁸² See also Stanley J. Kabala, 'The Hazardous Waste Problem in Eastern Europe', *RFE, Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 2, No. 25 (21 June 1991), p. 31.

⁸³ *RFE, Report on Eastern Europe*, 21 June 1991, p. 37.

⁸⁴ This subsection derived from Jiri Pehe, 'International Front Organizations Survive in Prague', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 2, No. 25 (21 June 1991).

⁸⁵ For example, International Organisation of Journalists abetted the expulsion of journalists, like Jiří Dienstbier, during normalisation.

not violated Czechoslovak law.⁸⁶ The decision may also have been made out of fear of antagonising the Soviet Union.

Czechoslovakia was unable to force concessions from the Soviet Union on ecological damage and related charges, and it decided that legality dictated that Moscow's international front organisations could remain in Prague. While these might have been blows to the Czechoslovaks, the Soviet leaders, for all their power potential, were unable to realise some demands on Czechoslovakia.

Soviet Disputes

While Czechoslovaks felt some issues in their relations with the Soviet Union were unsatisfactorily resolved, some Soviet grievances against Czechoslovakia went unmet. Disputes involved political asylum granted to deserters from the Soviet military and the assent of Czechoslovak officials to what the Soviet government called political marriages of Soviet deserters to Czechoslovak women in order to remain in Czechoslovakia.⁸⁷

The Soviet leaders also found that they could not substantially influence Prague over the issue of the 'Pink Tank'. To commemorate the city's liberation by the Red Army in May 1945, a Soviet T-34 battle tank was mounted on a three-meter high platform in Prague's western suburb of Smichov. Ironically, the tank's number was 23, which Czechoslovaks were quick to point out was exactly the number of years from the liberation of 1945 to the invasion of 1968, and also the number of years from the invasion to the withdrawal of those same forces in 1991.

On 28 April 1991, art student David Černý painted the tank pink to protest the use of a weapon as a symbol of peace. The Czechoslovak Army was ordered to repaint the tank military grey and Defence Minister and

⁸⁶ ČTK, 5 April 1991, cited in Pehe, 'International Front'.

⁸⁷ Various articles in *Lidové noviny* throughout 1990.

former dissident Luboš Dobrovský immediately apologised to the Soviet embassy. (Ironically, the student was then charged under article 202 for public disturbance, the same vague charge used against Czechoslovak dissidents).⁸⁸

However, on 17 May fifteen Federal MPs repainted the tank pink. The Soviet Union was dismayed and its ambassador to Prague, Boris Pankin, sent protestations to the Czechoslovak government. The Soviet government demanded that the Tank was to remain in place, and in its original colour. The eventual Czechoslovak position, offered as a compromise, was for the tank to be removed to a museum and an alternative, more pacific monument to the liberation be erected. In the end, the Czechoslovak position won. Today, not even the base which seated the tank remains.

The success of the Czechoslovak negotiations with the Soviet Union reflect that Prague saw no imminent danger from making demands. Their actions constituted good diplomacy. As Hans Morgenthau observed 'Of all the factors that make for the powers of a nation, the most important, however unstable, is the quality of diplomacy....Diplomacy, one might say, is the brains of national power, as national morale is its soul. If its vision is blurred, its judgment defective, and its determination feeble, all the advantages of geographical location, of self-sufficiency in food, raw materials, and industrial production, of military preparedness, of size and quality of population will in the long run avail a nation little'.⁸⁹

In negotiating with the Soviet Union, the Havel leadership was motivated by several considerations, including necessity, urgency, and, to

⁸⁸ Patrick Wright, 'Why a Pink Tank Made Prague See Red', *The Guardian*, 25 July 1991.

⁸⁹ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), pp. 158-59.

invert Morgenthau's example, letting diplomacy enhance overall abilities. Underlying these factors, even if an allowance is made for the possibility that the determination within which the Havel government pursued the negotiations was out of recognition of Soviet threat, it also seems relevant that the leadership functioned on the basis of regarding the two countries as equal. Post-Communist Czechoslovakia's disregard for geopolitically-based threats from the Soviet Union are further demonstrated by Czechoslovak military doctrine and its view of the Czechoslovak-Soviet border.

Military Doctrine and the Border: No Threats From the East

Military doctrine serves to assess a country's perceptions of threat. The three Central European countries revised their doctrines after 1989 to reflect their perception that they faced no specific threat. Czechoslovak military doctrine stated the armed forces were to defend against 'the land and air attacks of the aggressor from whatever direction and whatever part of the territory of the CSFR'.⁹⁰ All three Central European military establishments wanted an end to the overconcentration of forces along their Western flanks to be replaced by an even redistribution throughout their countries. No special arrangement was made in any of these countries for a disproportionately large deployment to the east. In the Czechoslovak case, the government was particularly slow in effecting a redeployment to Slovakia. Because Czechoslovakia was the only WTO country to flank both Germanies, the previously expected fulcrum of any initial ground conflict, its forces were disproportionately placed in western Bohemia.

⁹⁰ Zielonka, *Security*, p. 49.

The military certainly sought to restation some of these forces, as acknowledged on 31 October 1991 by Deputy Defense Minister Antonín Rasek.⁹¹ But Dobrovský and Deputy Defense Minister and Chief of the General Staff Major General Karel Pezl announced in July 1991 that of all the military reforms underway, the redeployment of soldiers from Bohemia to Slovakia was most problematic.⁹²

The legacy of geopolitics played out in the redeployment as well. As Slovakia was distant from the NATO-WTO faultline, it lacked airfields. The restationing of military aircraft to Slovakia under the new doctrine, and also of hardware after the post-federation division, thus proved difficult. Even with the money and bases that would have permitted a full and rapid redeployment to Slovakia, there was clearly no sense of threat.

This is further demonstrated by the lack of security on the Czechoslovak-Soviet border. While only fifty-miles long, it could have been easily patrolled. Even though Dienstbier said in January 1991 'we know that there are armed bands roving the western Ukraine and we have been expecting something like'⁹³ the attempt by Soviet citizens to force their way into either Czechoslovakia or Hungary in early 1991, it took precisely that kind of incident to alert the Czechoslovak leadership to the need for border security. A Slovak MP discovered that the Czechoslovak-Soviet border was apparently patrolled by only 37 policemen,⁹⁴ Dienstbier denied contemplating a modest security measure like erecting a fence along the border,⁹⁵ suggesting that defense of the border was not of concern to the Czechoslovak government.

⁹¹ ČTK, 31 October 1990, in *FBIS*, 2 November 1990.

⁹² *Národní obroda*, 8 July 1991.

⁹³ *The Guardian*, 25 January 1991.

⁹⁴ *The Independent*, 26 January 1991.

⁹⁵ *The Guardian*, 25 January 1991.

An objective assessment of the Czechoslovak government's disregard of threats from the Soviet shared border can be taken from the case of Hungary which recorded that of 19,000 people attempting to cross its borders in the first eight months of 1991, only 21 were Soviets.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, from the provisions contained in the new military doctrine and the lack of security along the Czechoslovak-Soviet border, in its first year the post-Communist Czechoslovak government seems to have discounted threats from the East.

At the same time, however, developments within the Soviet Union increasingly alarmed the Czechoslovak leadership. Throughout 1990, Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry staff noted the increased influence of Soviet 'hardliners', a sinister development culminating first in the resignation of Shevardnadze. This was followed by the January 1991 suppression of Baltic nationalist movements by SAS-style OMON or 'Black Berets'. The Czechoslovak leadership had extended as much good will and trust to Gorbachev as could be expected but it was growing increasingly concerned about the power of such 'hardline' forces, particularly in the armed forces and KGB.⁹⁷

The Baltic events suggested one of two developments: either Gorbachev had lost control of parts of the Soviet security forces, or he was aware of their activities, perhaps having even issued their orders. Neither scenario could have been reassuring for the Central Europeans who had supported Baltic secessionism, and after January 1991, Prague became unambiguous in seeking the Warsaw Pact's disbandment.

The extent to which that policy, as opposed to a non-existent policy on the border, was the function of geopolitical concerns is treated

⁹⁶ *SWB*, 11 September 1991, cited in Zielonka, *Security*, p. 75.

⁹⁷ This general view of the Czechoslovak assessment of Gorbachev is from Dr Miloslav Had, head of the Policy and Planning Section of the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry. Interviews with the author, September 1994 and 1995.

presently. First, however, Prague's understanding of Moscow's decision to cut oil supplies must be examined.

The Oil Crisis

The Czechoslovak government was soon reminded of the country's dependence on the Soviet Union for oil. Small cuts in Soviet energy deliveries occurred shortly after the Velvet Revolution, such as the January 1990 twenty percent reduction in some fuels.⁹⁸ In July 1990, without informing the Czechoslovak government, Moscow cut oil supplies by 35 percent. In response the Czechoslovak government enacted a fifty percent increase in gas prices. Federal Economics Minister Dlouhý announced that the country had oil reserves for only a few days and anticipated the situation to deteriorate, expecting oil supplies to be cut further in 1991 than by the 2.6 million tonnes already in 1990.⁹⁹

In the oil crisis, the Czechoslovaks were clearly treated as an unequal partner by the Soviet Union, even if the Havel government may have had a different vision previously. Prague sought talks with Moscow several times during the oil crisis, but was rebuffed by Soviet economic officials who claimed that they had to prepare for the forthcoming Party Congress. Klaus explained in the same month 'I became increasingly angry in my letters to [Soviet Finance] Minister Popov but they were not prepared to meet us' until much later.¹⁰⁰

A series of efforts were undertaken by the Czechoslovak government to open talks with the Soviet Union on energy shipments. Federal Foreign Trade Minister Slavomír Strancák went to Moscow but

⁹⁸ *Le Monde*, 21-22 January 1990.

⁹⁹ *International Herald Tribune*, 20 July 1990.

¹⁰⁰ *The Financial Times*, 18 July 1990.

conceded on 27 July 1990 that his talks with Soviet officials had failed and a shortfall in oil supply of 2.6 million tonnes was to be expected.¹⁰¹

By October, filling stations in Czechoslovakia had quarter-mile queues, and Čalfa felt obliged to cancel his foreign visits.¹⁰² The Czechoslovak government rationed fuel and raised fuel prices a further 33 percent.¹⁰³ On 29 October 1990, Čalfa said that the energy cutback could threaten the functioning of the country and was a priority in his visit to Moscow.¹⁰⁴

Czechoslovakia showed its desperation by seeking oil on the world market, approaching Mexico,¹⁰⁵ and had contracted in July to buy 50,000 tons from the West, but the government was highly reluctant to spend any more hard currency.¹⁰⁶

The situation was moderated somewhat when the Soviet Union agreed to provide the country with sufficient quantities of oil for 1991. After a six-hour meeting of Čalfa and Dlouhý with Soviet Premier Ryzkhov, Moscow agreed to ship 13 million tonnes of oil, 3.5 million less than the usual yearly quota, with the difference expected to be made up by supplies from Iran and Venezuela. At the same time, Czechoslovak representatives overcame Soviet resistance to an atypical oil deal with the Tyumen oil refinery in Siberia.¹⁰⁷

Despite these stopgap arrangements, the problems of energy supply continued throughout the period under study. On 2 January 1992, the

¹⁰¹ *The Financial Times*, 27 July 1990.

¹⁰² *The Independent*, 5 October 1990.

¹⁰³ *Le Monde*, 6 October 1990.

¹⁰⁴ *Narodná obroda*, 29 October 1990.

¹⁰⁵ *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 August 1990.

¹⁰⁶ *The Financial Times*, 18 July 1990.

¹⁰⁷ *The Financial Times*, 31 October 1990.

former Soviet Union undertook to supply Czechoslovakia, with some 10,000 tons being shipped by pipeline to the most severely affected city of Litvinov. This came at a time when Radio Československo reported that the major refineries at Bratislava, Kralupy and Vltavou had supplies for only a few days.¹⁰⁸

The Czechoslovak government made the best of the situation, using agile diplomacy as in the case of troop negotiations. While Prague succeeded in getting some oil from Moscow, the oil crisis provides the one instance in which geographic factors determined the Czechoslovak policy agenda.

New Diplomatic Relations, the August Coup, and Soviet Collapse

With Soviet institutional leverage over Czechoslovakia ever diminishing, it was Moscow which attempted to foster new relations with Prague. In doing so, the Soviet Union used references to inexorable links between the two countries. For example, in June 1991, Defense Minister Dmitrii Yazov attempted to portray relations between Czechoslovakia and the USSR as inalterably close and intertwined. A day before the Soviet withdrawal was completed, Yazov denied that the WTO 'invaded' Czechoslovakia in 1968 and referred to the 'brotherly relations' of Czechs and Russians and insisted that Czechs would always be closer to Russians than to Germans.¹⁰⁹

Despite these disagreements, relations between the two countries proceeded reasonably amicably and fruitfully. The Soviet-inspired 1970 Friendship Treaty was due for renewal in April 1990, and in its successor, the Soviet Union insisted on a clause in the bilateral treaties

¹⁰⁸ Stanice Československo, 3 January 1992, in *FBIS*, 3 January 1992.

¹⁰⁹ Obrman, 'Withdrawal', p. 16.

with each former satellite effectively vetoing their right to join any security arrangement seemingly aimed against the Soviet Union.¹¹⁰ While Romania accepted the clause,¹¹¹ Czechoslovak decision-makers were adamantly opposed to it.¹¹²

The August 1991 'Coup' confirmed the change in Czechoslovak opinion of the risks emanating from the Soviet Union. Members of Gorbachev's Politburo took advantage of his absence from the Soviet capital in order to attempt a seizure of power, almost certainly to prevent the signing of an all-Union Treaty relaxing Soviet control over constituent republics.

The coup-makers proved themselves inadequate Marxist-Leninists, having not digested Lenin's 'April Thesis', which provided practical instructions for a coup, such as securing control over communications centres and arms depots. As clumsy and short-lived as it proved, the coup nevertheless sparked the three Central European states into even closer military cooperation.¹¹³

Moscow dropped its insistence on the clause vetoing membership in alliances after the coup and, a draft Treaty on Good Neighbourliness, Friendly Relations, and Cooperation was initialled on 3 October 1991 by Boris Pankin and Dienstbier. The Treaty became redundant with the collapse of the Soviet Union three months later.

Finally, the Czechoslovak leadership's view of the future of the Warsaw Pact requires consideration. Its multilateral significance and the relevance it held beyond Czechoslovak-Soviet relations accord it analysis in its own right.

¹¹⁰ *The Independent*, 8 June 1991.

¹¹¹ Vladimir Socor, 'The Romanian-Soviet Friendship Treaty and Its Regional Implications', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 2, No. 18 (3 May 1991).

¹¹² Interviews with Had and Vondra.

¹¹³ This motivation in regional cooperation is discussed in chapter 6.

THE WARSAW TREATY ORGANIZATION

The Czechoslovak government did not initially seek the disbandment of the WTO. It believed that the Pact could be, and in fact was in the process of being transformed into a strictly political organization. It furthermore believed that the WTO would thereby serve its overarching foreign policy goal of eliminating power politics from Europe.

In keeping with its belief in legality, the post-Communist Czechoslovak government acknowledged its commitments to the WTO. Initially, the Czechoslovak leadership was satisfied that the Soviet Union's condemnation of the 1968 WTO intervention would give new life and meaning to the organisation. On 28 December 1989, Federal Deputy Prime Minister Ján Čarnogurský said the Warsaw Pact remained significant in Czechoslovak foreign and defense policy thinking, even though the country was seeking relations with other states. He added that Czechoslovakia's WTO membership had gained 'new impulses' after the Soviet denunciation of the 1968 intervention.¹¹⁴

When Havel became Supreme Commander of the Czechoslovakia armed forces on 2 January 1990, he acknowledged the legality of the WTO and Czechoslovakia's obligations to the Treaty.¹¹⁵ The Czechoslovak government initially appeared so much in favour of adhering to its military commitments that the Czechoslovak Army - with Havel's explicit approval - conducted joint exercises with Soviet forces stationed in the country. The size of the exercises were scaled down due to protests, but nonetheless it is remarkable that the exercises were held at all. The Družba 90 (Friendship 90) manoeuvres involved 5,000 Czechoslovak troops

¹¹⁴ ČTK, 28 December 1989, in *FBIS*, 2 January 1990.

¹¹⁵ ČTK, 2 January 1990, in *FBIS*, 2 January 1990.

and over 1,200 Soviet soldiers around the north Bohemian city of Zatec.¹¹⁶

Unlike Poland, Czechoslovakia did not seek continuation of the WTO because of fears of a united Germany. The Czechoslovaks did not expect German demands for territorial concessions, whereas the Poles anticipated such not only out of historical fear but because Kohl hesitated to guarantee existing borders.

Instead, Havel and Dienstbier attributed a role for the WTO, along with NATO, in their overarching scheme for the unification of Europe and the elimination of traditional power politics from the continent.¹¹⁷ On 10 March 1990 Havel explained that NATO and the WTO were already evolving into political organisations, and, with the agreement of relevant countries, the two military alliances would be integrated into the Helsinki process, and thus would no longer function as independent organizations.¹¹⁸

Havel's and Dienstbier's idealism was to include the Soviet Union in Europe, and the Warsaw Pact posed no obstacle to that goal. Rather, while they wanted the military aspect to be abolished, they saw the Pact's transformation in the context of contributing to a new pan-European structure.

Evidence that this view was being thwarted by factors of power and geography - precisely the elements that should not be prime to idealists - came with Soviet military actions against separatist forces in the Baltic republics in January 1991. While certainly a moral consideration, the 'Baltic crackdown', must also have been seen in geopolitical terms.

¹¹⁶ The Commander of the Western Military Zone, Colonel-General Mojmír Zacharias explained that because Czechoslovakia was still a member of the WTO, it was obliged to hold joint exercises. ČTK, 1 March 1990, in *FBIS*, 2 March 1990, p. 29; for groups opposing the exercises, see Prague Domestic Service, 28 February 1990, in *FBIS*, 1 March 1990, p. 17.

¹¹⁷ This is discussed in chapter 7.

¹¹⁸ *Die Welt*, 10 March 1990, in *FBIS*, 12 March 1990. Dienstbier reiterated these developments in his speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London. See Jiří Dienstbier, 'From the Europe of the Blocs', Speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 3 April 1990, *passim*.

The Baltic, particularly Lithuania, where the majority of killings occurred, was neither geographically nor spiritually far from Prague.¹¹⁹ In saying that there was no similar threat to Czechoslovakia, Havel's government initially attempted to deny that the Baltic events were a geopolitical threat, but they soon came to recognise that there was a physical threat.

With the Baltic crackdown Czechoslovakia became adamant about withdrawing from the WTO, even unilaterally, unless the organisation was terminated by mutual agreement of its members. Hungary, by contrast, had advocated unilateral withdrawal since it had been able to pursue an independent foreign policy in 1989. The Czechoslovak leadership's interpretation of the Baltic crackdown resulted in its definitive decision to seek the swift and irreversible dissolution of the WTO.

The swiftness and relative ease with which the WTO was terminated on 30 June 1991, once the decision to do so was taken, ironically undermines the strength of idealism in Czechoslovak foreign policy. Havel expressed pleasure with the course of events, declaring on the day of termination of the WTO: 'Now it is confirmed how far-sighted it was that we did not wish to withdraw unilaterally from the Warsaw Pact as some radicals recommended, and that instead we wanted to stay within it and through a peaceful and matter-of-fact way and [hold] talks toward disbanding the Warsaw Pact...'.¹²⁰ Such a statement, however, appears to contradict the Czechoslovak expectation that the WTO could evolve into a political organisation. As Dienstbier explained in April 1990: 'we should, as speedily as possible, transfer the hitherto functions of the blocs to new all-European structures based on the shared resolve to uphold the law, to observe treaties and human rights'. The former military structures, he continued, were to be 'rebuilt into new structures of

¹¹⁹ At the time of the Baltic killings graffiti appeared on both Prague and Vilnius walls comparing that event with the 1968 intervention.

¹²⁰ Československý Rozhlas Radio, 30 June 1991, in *FBIS*, 1 July 1991.

cooperation and European integration'.¹²¹ The role of the WTO in the larger plan of Czechoslovak foreign policy leads to the discussion of European security in the final chapter.

The post-Communist Czechoslovak government recognised the need to achieve certain goals in its relations with the Soviet Union. Foremost was regaining Czechoslovakia's sovereignty by severing the Soviet mechanisms of economic, military and political control. Had the new Czechoslovak leadership simply perceived the Soviet Union as an unchallengeable threat, then post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy would have been stunted from birth. Not only was there a requirement for the Czechoslovak government to see the two countries as equals, it is likely that there were objective reasons for the leadership to think so.

Chapter 3 illustrated the historical influence Germany had over Czechoslovakia and the way in which this influence was perceived also as inalterable. By contrast, this chapter contended that Soviet influence - while still appreciable - was based overwhelmingly on constructed mechanisms that could ultimately be dismantled.

Of foremost importance to Czechoslovakia's policy toward the Soviet Union after the November Revolution was the humanist belief adopted by the Czechoslovak leadership that once the Soviet Union had apologised, the two states could be considered as equals.

Various issues in post-1989 Czechoslovak-Soviet relations illustrated that the Soviet Union did not reciprocate sovereign equality. Paramount among these were the negotiations for Soviet troop withdrawals. While the withdrawal can rightly be seen as a victory for Czechoslovakia, substantial evidence suggests that the Soviet Union did not want its forces out at all, and certainly not according to the deadlines imposed

¹²¹ Jiří Dienstbier, 'From the Europe of the Blocs', Speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 3 April 1990,' p. 7.

sought by Czechoslovakia. Yazov's statement concluding the military Soviet presence in Czechoslovakia negated the apology for the intervention, which apparently had influenced Czechoslovak policy towards Moscow. The fact of the withdrawal can only be seen as a necessity on the Soviet Union's part. It was not motivated out of civic responsibility to Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak vision of equality and partnership between the two countries was further eroded by the oil crisis. By its own admission, the Czechoslovak government said that the Soviet Union was treating it as unequal partner. The idealist content of foreign policy was curtailed abruptly by the dependence on the Soviet Union for energy.

As in other foreign policy areas, the Czechoslovak government became increasingly aware of geopolitical factors in its dealing with the Soviet Union. Much as in its view of unified Germany, Havel's leadership initially appeared to disregard any threats from the Soviet Union based merely on its size. This was demonstrated by the lack of security along the common border and in Czechoslovakia's new military doctrine. It was also shown in Czechoslovakia's initial - and unusual - view that the WTO was not in itself a threat, that unilateral withdrawal as proposed by Hungary was radical and inappropriate, and, even more significantly, that the military structure could be transformed and used in redrawing the security of Europe.

German unification was widely seen as the most fundamental geopolitical change since the Second World War. The collapse of the Soviet behemoth usurped that title. The implosion of the Soviet Union and the dispersion of its demographic, military and natural resources power across several new frontiers meant that, ironically, Havel's concept of treating all countries on an equal basis could become more realistic. That possibility arose, however, not through the promotion and acceptance of universal humanist values but in the collapse of the Soviet Union itself.

CHAPTER 6

REGIONAL RELATIONS: THE MUTUAL REINFORCEMENT OF IDEALS AND GEOPOLITICS

Post-Communist Czechoslovakia's relations with its Central European¹ neighbours after 1989 was overtly inspired by the idealist thinking and common experience of dissidents before the 1989 Revolutions. But unlike in other areas of Czechoslovak foreign policy, the expectation of regional relations was also conditioned from the outset by an awareness of geopolitical and systemic limitations on that cooperation. Achievements of Central European regional cooperation included the creation of common bargaining positions, and thereby policy successes, in relations with the Soviet Union, the Atlantic Alliance and European organisations. These successes were attributable to the measured combination of dissident ideals and recognition of geographic possibilities and limitations. Regional cooperation faltered, however, after the June 1992 Czechoslovak elections when the idealist support for regional cooperation personified by Havel was replaced by the antithetical cost-benefit approach of Václav Klaus. The chapter concludes that dissident ideas were necessary but not sufficient for regional cooperation.

The chapter begins with a brief historical background to notions of 'Central Europe' and regional cooperation. It proceeds to establish the political and geographic basis for the objective and subjective definition of contemporary Central Europe and considers Havel's vision of regional relations.

¹ Debate surrounds the cultural and geographic meaning of 'Central Europe' and is considered briefly below. 'Central Europe' here is taken to mean Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia after Communism. For the changing geographic borders of this region, see Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 12-17. For a contradictory use of the terms, see the otherwise useful volume by Zbigniew Dobosiewicz, *Foreign Investment in Eastern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. xi, 1 and 126).

Interpretations of geography by the Czechoslovak leadership and how they were used are then examined through four post-Communist regional cooperation initiatives: the Baltic Council; Czechoslovak-Polish federation; the Alpen-Adria Group and the *Pentagonale* and *Hexagonale* initiatives; and the Bratislava process and the Visegrád Group.

The chapter then considers how geopolitical considerations conditioned the initiatives and achievements of the Visegrád Group, considering how outside factors played on the workings of the Group, both limiting and facilitating its undertakings. These include geopolitical perceptions of developments in the Soviet Union and West Europe's geopolitical understanding of Central Europe. The chapter closes with an assessment of what other elements Central European co-operation had to overcome to suggest that Central Europe cooperation was not likely and that dissident ideas therefore featured significantly in achieving that level of cooperation. As much as the Czechoslovak leadership was aware of systemic and geopolitical conditions and sought to use them to its advantage, those conditions still came to determine the course of regional cooperation.

NOTIONS OF CENTRAL EUROPE

No preordained reason demands that neighbouring states should cooperate. If anything, contact can generate adversarial relations and the discipline of International Relations often takes as its starting point the assumption that cooperation is an anomaly rather than the norm, even when common interests suggest otherwise.²

The history of Central Europe contributes substantially to such an assertion. While Casimir III, Jan, and Charles I, the kings of the Poles,

² See, for example, Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

Czechs and Hungarians met in Visegrád in 1335 to create the foundation for co-operation, rarely since then have these nations been cordial let alone trustworthy allies. Before 1989, only external threats precipitated any sort of commonality among the three nations and not even that was a guarantee of co-operation.

Under Austrian rule, and then even under the Austro-Hungarian *Ausgleich*, there was a sense of commonality among Poles, Czechs and Hungarians.³ Nevertheless, the Hungarians were seen not as fellow minorities but as co-colonisers. R.W. Seton-Watson called the *Ausgleich* 'the work of statesmen who knew how to take occasion by the hand, [and] pitted it against others to whom this art was a sealed book'.⁴ As one Hungarian intellectual observed, 'The fact is that Hungary had been proclaimed the arch-enemy of the Central European nations regardless of the fact that it had acceded only to the second rung of the power structure after Austria...'.⁵

For all the drawbacks of the Austro-Hungarian empire, leading Czech intellectuals idealised its merits. The important nineteenth-century Czech liberal František Palacký contended that if the Austro-Hungarian monarchy did not exist, it would have had to have been created. Masaryk maintained that Czech and Slovak interests were served by the retention of the multi-ethnic empire until the outbreak and denouement of the Great War made other contingencies necessary.⁶

³ See Péter Hanák, 'Central Europe: An Alternative to Disintegration', *New Hungarian Quarterly* Vol. 33 (August 1992), p. 6.

⁴ R.W. Seton-Watson, *German, Slav, and Magyar* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1916), p. 34.

⁵ Miklós Duray, 'The European Ideal: Reality or Wishful Thinking in Eastern Central Europe?', in George Schöpflin and Janet Wood (eds), *In Search of Central Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 100.

⁶ For a brief introduction to the factors behind Masaryk's position, see Wandycz, *Price of Freedom*, esp. pp. 189-191. This is not to say that he was not critical of the Empire, particularly of its foreign policy, and thereby unconsciously aided his future efforts at Czech independence. See Skilling,

In the interwar period, Czechoslovakia was unable to develop security arrangements with Poland, and could not with revisionist Hungary. Restraining Budapest was the key factor in the creation of the Little Entente, composed of the three beneficiaries of Hungarian territory transferred at Trianon. The response of both Poland and Hungary to German aggression against rump Czechoslovakia in 1939 was to occupy parts of the prostrate country, acts considered by some to rank among the 13 most important European conflicts of the interwar period.⁷

Even under the common experience of Communist occupation, Poles and Hungarians resented the apparent indifference of the Czechs to the respective national challenges each made to Communist rule in 1956. Heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne Otto von Hapsburg displayed both his pleasure and his surprise at the Sopron 'picnic' of summer 1989 which aided the flight of East German holidaymakers to Austria which he said allowed Hungarians and Austrians to cooperate to free 'Prussians'.⁸

In spite of, or more likely because of the lack of co-operation among the nations of the region, notions of federations and confederations have been circulating for almost 150 years, beginning with Lajos Kossuth's Danube Confederation of the 1860s and Oszkár Jászi's Danube United States.⁹ Debate over the content and meaning of Central Europe was sparked in the 1980s by an essay by Milan Kundera published originally in French as 'Un occident kidnappé - ou la tragédie de l'Europe centrale'. It was published in English under the somewhat less impassioned title 'The Tragedy of Central Europe', which resulted in

T.G. Masaryk, ch. 9.

⁷ Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future', p. 22.

⁸ BBC, 'Fall of the Wall', broadcast October 1994.

⁹ Kumiko Haba, 'Central European Regional Co-operation and European Integration - A Study of Hungary', *Japanese Slavic and East European Studies* Vol. 13 (1992), p. 66; and Tökés, 'Visegrád', p. 102.

responses from independent intellectuals throughout the region.¹⁰ As much as this discussion highlighted the elusive cultural and geographic definition of Central Europe, it underscored one feature: that even discussion of mutual issues, let alone their resolution, was prompted by external forces, in this case, the region's 'Sovietisation'.

A specific proposal for Central European confederation was advanced by the leading Czech historian and official of the wartime government-in-exile Hubert Ripka. For its apparent relevance today, though written in 1944, it is worth lengthy quotation:

If a federation is to work, the three following conditions, to my mind, would have essentially to be fulfilled:

(1) The countries which are to form a federation should first of all have the desire and prove the need for their grouping. The federation, in other words, should be spontaneous, and not imposed.

(2) A federation can only exist between States which have the same alignment in foreign policy and co-ordinate their systems of military defence.

(3) The internal régimes of the States in a federation should be based on the same political and social principles - and that last condition seems to me to be essential. (There is certainly a difference between an alliance among States and a confederation: States possessing divergent internal regimes can join in a political and military alliance, but a Confederation which, to a greater or less extent, also intervenes in the internal life of its members of necessity demands that the internal regimes of all its members should be based on the same principles - it is impossible to conceive a federation one of whose members would have a collectivist, socialist system, another a liberal democratic system, a third a feudal one, in which one would be a monarchy, another a republic, etc.)¹¹

The third criterion of common domestic politics and societies was probably best fulfilled after 1989. But despite proposals to this end, no federation was to be forthcoming. Even though it was unlikely that Hungary and Poland would have pursued a tripartite federation, it was Czechoslovak

¹⁰ Milan Kundera, 'The Tragedy of Central Europe', *The New York Review of Books* (26 April 1984), pp. 33-8. For responses, see Schöpflin and Wood, *In Search*.

¹¹ Hubert Ripka, *Small and Great Nations: The Conditions of a New International Organisation* (London: Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1944), p. 20.

leaders who did most to suggest the idea but who were also responsible for limiting its success.

Havel's Notion of Regional Relations

The idea of regional cooperation had not received the detailed attention among Czechoslovak dissidents that characterised their thinking on the general reconstruction of European relations.¹² Even once Civic Forum began formulating foreign policy, it neglected regional relations. The foreign policy section of Civic Forum's 7-point programme of 25 November 1989 referred to the WTO and the CMEA specifically, but spoke only generally about establishing good relations with all countries. The establishment of good regional relations was probably omitted for one of several possible reasons. First, regional relations could be subsumed in the notion of creating universal good relations, to which the programme aspired; second, East European populations had heard for decades the artificial imperatives of constructing friendly relations with their socialist brethren so that such a call during the Revolution would have seemed anachronistic; and third, a major plank of Civic Forum was the slogan 'Back to Europe', and specific parochial references to equally bankrupt countries would have been unnecessary.

In addition to these reasons, regional leaders like Havel probably did not need specific references to regional relations because for them this had become something of a personal matter in the 1980s. Herein lies the role of ideas in inspiring regional co-operation. Under Communism, especially in the 1980s, Czechoslovak dissidents, including Havel and Dienstbier, met personally with leading Central European dissidents. Meetings were held of Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity in the mountains

¹² See chapter 7.

forming the common border between the two countries. Havel was known to hate hiking but nevertheless climbed those mountains five times for the 'reward' of meeting Polish dissidents like Michnik and Jacek Kuron.¹³ Participants in Polish-Czechoslovak solidarity interviewed for this study confirmed the importance of these personal contacts to post-Communist regional relations.¹⁴ Contacts by Czechoslovak dissidents with their Hungarian counterparts were fewer than with the Poles, but nevertheless were sufficient for the discussion of common Central European questions and solutions.¹⁵ Transnational dissident friendship continued after 1989, with figures like Michnik, Konrád and Havel meeting in Prague.¹⁶

If a dissident-intellectual notion of Central Europe existed, it was of a region which shared a common cultural identity and which surpassed the ethnic and nationalistic animosities which characterised the region's history. For the Czechoslovaks, in particular, there was nostalgia for the Austro-Hungarian Empire. That was seen as a time and space of relative ethnic tolerance and of cultural flourish. This is not to suggest that the Czechoslovak image of Austro-Hungary was accurate.¹⁷ One of these impressionistic liberties was neglect of the fact that the borders of post-Communist Central Europe did not equate with those of Austria-Hungary.

¹³ Havel, *Dálkový výslech*, p. 126.

¹⁴ Interviews with participants on Polish-Czechoslovak solidarity Dienstbier, Fialková-Němcová and Vondra. Had, who was not involved, confirmed the influence of these personal connections on post-Communist Czechoslovak-Polish relations.

¹⁵ Discussion of common Hungarian, Czechoslovak and Polish dissident views of Central Europe are provided in Garton Ash's essay on, respectively, Konrád, Havel and Michnik. See Timothy Garton Ash, 'Does Central Europe Exist?', in *The Uses of Adversity*.

¹⁶ See Konrád's account, *The Guardian*, 5 April 1990.

¹⁷ Tony Judt, 'The Dilemmas of Dissidence: The Politics of Opposition in East-Central Europe', *Eastern European Politics and Societies* Vol. 2, No. 2 (Spring 1988), p. 224.

Because of the illusive meaning of Central Europe it is necessary to establish how the three countries, and not others, came to define themselves and be constituted as a common entity.

Defining Regional Partners

Scholars of 'Central Europe' and Western policy-makers who reacted to events in the area each employed criteria to define Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland as an individual category of post-Communist states.

The first criterion used to group the three countries was their perceived common historical experience. The leaders, particularly the independent intellectuals of these three countries did much to emphasise that their historical experience was different from the peoples to their East.¹⁸ Western observers and many policy-makers after 1989 came to share this position.¹⁹

The post-Communist lands have been divided into areas on the basis of historical legacy: 'It has become clear that there is an East-Central European area, that there is a successor to the Russian Empire and that there are also the successor states of the Ottoman Empire. What has also become clear is that these different historical traditions are becoming increasingly significant'.²⁰ These countries underwent events crucial to western development - the Renaissance and the Enlightenment,

¹⁸ As evidence of Czech perceptions of cultural and political differentiation in the region, Havel stated 'Thanks to its former democratic traditions and to its *unique intellectual and spiritual climate*, the Czech Republic, the westernmost of the post-Communist countries is relatively well off'. Havel, 'Post-Communist Nightmare', p. 8. Emphasis added.

¹⁹ As will be discussed in chapter 7, this is not to say that Western analysts and policy-makers have come to accept the 'Central European' historical experience as synonymous to that of Western Europe, or that that such a claim is sufficient for membership in 'European' institutions such as the European Community.

²⁰ Georg Brunner, 'The Rule of Law, Democracy, the Social State: Signposts on the Road to Transformation', in Weilemann, p. 183.

in particular - albeit later and perhaps with lesser impact. Just as their backwardness relative to the West separates them from the West, so does their relative advancement over the East again differentiate them.²¹

Historical development, and policies derived from an interpretation of that development, then, created an identifiable region. These criteria, however, should have meant that East Germany was included in post-Communist Central Europe. It was, however, largely excluded.

Germany

The impact of German reunification on Czechoslovakia in general and on Czechoslovak foreign policy in particular was given some consideration in chapter 4. It is necessary here to consider how East Germany would have fitted into the context of regional co-operation.

The solidarity manifested in relations between Czechoslovak and Polish dissidents did not extend to East Germans. Czech-born Jacques Rupnik refers to Polish dissident newspaper *Nowa Koalicija* as asserting that 'the natural representative of the interests of East German citizens is the German Federal Republic', which he takes to signify 'a Central Europe without Germans'. Poles also felt that the German rapprochement of the 1980s did not extend to freedom for Poles.²² Thus, common belief and personal comradery was lacking to ensure East Germany's inclusion in

²¹ See Daniel Chirot (ed.), *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe*. See Anton Špiesz, 'Czechoslovakia's Place in the Agrarian Development of Middle and East Europe in Modern Times', *Studia Historica Slovaca* Vol. 6 (1969), pp. 7-62 offers a useful counterpoint. Much of this discussion can also be drawn from the contributions by Schöpflin, Seton-Watson, Bibó, and Hanák in Schöpflin and Wood (eds).

²² Jacques Rupnik, 'Central Europe or Mitteleuropa', in Stephen R. Graubard (ed.), *Eastern Europe...Central Europe...Europe* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 253-4.

the creation of any type of post-Communist construct in Central Europe.²³

The role the Czechoslovak dissidents attributed to Germany in the much larger goal of reconstructing European security: German unification was considered as a necessary pre-condition for the reassembly of the European continent.²⁴

Exclusion of Other East European Countries

It is in the instance of the 'southeastern' former Soviet satellites that the argument of historical development becomes exclusionary. At least one senior Romanian official acknowledged that Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia had a natural proclivity towards co-operation with each other. When asked at a conference in Budapest in April 1991 if Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were not seeking regional integration to the exclusion of Romania, Ion Panu, security and foreign policy adviser to Romanian President Iliescu replied: 'In the wake of the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and CEMA, the intention to create new structures is natural. Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary rightly wish to strengthen the traditional ties that link them'.²⁵ Despite Panu's enlightened comments, *The Economist* wrote that Romania felt 'hurt to be left out' of the trilateral Central European co-operation.²⁶ Indeed, Romania occasionally suggested that the creation of the Visegrád Group was a

²³ The Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry was preparing a joint position with East Germany on the CSCE in summer 1990.

²⁴ See Dienstbier, *Snění o Evropě*, chapter 5.

²⁵ Budapest Domestic Service, 8 April 1991, reported as 'Policy Conference Delegates Interviewed', in *FBIS*, 15 April 1991, pp. 1-2.

²⁶ *The Economist*, 13 July 1991.

conspiracy against it, a part of which aimed even at including Transylvania, while excluding the remainder of the country.²⁷

Bulgaria acknowledged that its political development after Communism was not as advanced as that of Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia and that it was using those three countries as a standard against which to measure its own progress. Bulgarian President Zhelev told a political party conference in June 1991 that one of the main measuring sticks for transition from its Communist past 'whether Bulgaria will no longer be apart from the three central European countries - Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia'.²⁸

The international community differentiated among these countries in the policies advanced to them. For example, Bulgaria and Romania were deemed ineligible for European accords at the same time as the Visegrád group because they were 'further behind in their democratic, and in the restructuring of their economies'.²⁹ When the United States began to lift arms embargoes to former Communist countries in December 1991, these together were the first beneficiaries.³⁰ Similarly, France lifted visa requirements for the three countries on the grounds that their domestic political situation merited it.³¹ Policy decisions based on the seemingly 'objective' criteria of historical development reinforced the perception that certain countries belonged inside and outside 'Central Europe'.

²⁷ Dan Ionescu, 'Transylvania and Romanian-Polish Relations', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 2 (11 October 1991), pp. 24-7.

²⁸ He added 'all this depends on the new elections'. *Demokratiya*, 24 June 1991, in *FBIS*, 1 July 1991.

²⁹ *Financial Times*, 22 August 1991.

³⁰ Douglas L. Clarke, 'Central Europe: Military Cooperation in the Triangle', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 10 January 1992, p. 44.

³¹ Gil Loescher, *Refugee Movements and International Security* (London: IISS Adelphi Paper No. 268, Spring 1992), p. 26.

REGIONAL GROUPINGS

Before presuming that Poland and Hungary had no other option than to co-operate with Czechoslovakia, it is important to recall that both countries pursued regional relations based on geography and history, and which thereby excluded Czechoslovakia. The response to several of these initiatives by Czechoslovakia's leadership showed that it was not motivated purely by idealistic notions of regional identity.

Poland and the Baltic Council

The Baltic Council was a loose organisation which had its origins in the Nordic Council of 1952. A joint Swedish-Polish proposal in September 1990 resulted in a Conference which eventually saw the participation of all countries bordering the Baltic: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russia and Poland. Another Conference was held in March 1992 which generated the Council of Baltic Sea States. The Baltic Conferences and the subsequent Council dealt primarily with functional issues such as environmental and transportation issues. Landlocked Czechoslovakia was thus not included.

The Baltic Council was one example of how Poland was drawn away from cooperation with Czechoslovakia. Some commentators, such as Roman Szporluk in a contribution appropriately entitled 'The Burden of History - Made Lighter by Geography', encouraged the Poles to establish multifaceted relations with its traditional geographic neighbours of Ukraine, Belorussia and Lithuania in order to feel more in the centre of Europe and less on the fringes.³² Political developments in the areas of

³² Roman Szporluk, 'The Burden of History - Made Lighter by Geography', *Problems of Communism* (July-August 1990), pp. 45-48. See also Stephen R. Burant, 'International Relations in a Regional Context: Poland and Its Eastern Neighbours - Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine', *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 45, No.

the Soviet Union adjacent to Poland arguably demonstrated differences in Polish perceptions of regional relations as distinct from Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Wrote one newspaper, 'Poland is interested in joining the Pentagonal group, but the Baltic unrest shows that its historical and geographic values are different from those of central Europe'.³³

'Inherent' Polish geographic links to regions with which Czechoslovakia had less contact turned geography against it.

Federation Foregone: Czechoslovak-Polish Relations

One possible form of regional relations to fit Czechoslovak rhetoric about regional cooperation and even confederation was rejected by its leadership because it threatened the country's sovereignty and the overall Czechoslovak ambition to redesign Europe. This was the idea of a Polish-Czechoslovak federation.

If grounds exist to argue that common historical experience and culture facilitate cooperation, Czechoslovakia and Poland provide a leading example. The two countries were home to the three West Slav languages³⁴ and until the end of the Czechoslovak federation, each shared its longest border with the other.

The idea of binding together the three countries, and in particular the two Slav states, found support among many observers as well as from historical antecedents. Polish-born former National Security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski suggested on 2 January 1990 on Radio Warsaw that, because of the 'geopolitical and economic situation', Poland and

3 (1993), pp. 395-418.

³³ Roger Boyles, 'East Europe Split on Baltic Unrest', *Times*, 18 January 1991.

³⁴ Excluding Croatian and Slovenian, and deceased Upper and Lower Lusatian.

Czechoslovakia should form a federation.³⁵ The proposal found popularity in some Polish circles and provoked 'intense political discussion' in advance of Havel's visit.³⁶ Dienstbier noted, in spite of an interlude of four decades, the undiminished validity of a regional proposal made by the Beneš government-in-exile.³⁷ The precursors date even to 1918, when Masaryk suggested to the Czechoslovak National Assembly that: 'A common frontier and similar history prompt us to political friendship with Poland. I have had a great deal of discussion with the Polish leaders. We even considered a federation...'. Masaryk concluded instead, as his successors did in 1990, that 'in the near future each nation is likely to face much constructive work of its own and that it would be better not to complicate matters at this point'.³⁸

Senior Polish dissident leaders were interviewed by the Czechoslovak media in 1990 on the possibilities of cooperation. The universal view was that such cooperation was highly desirable and feasible.³⁹ Similarly, Polish journalists *Gazeta Wyborcza* asked Dienstbier about the current significance of the previous meetings in the Tatra mountains between Polish and Czech dissident who now hold positions of power. Dienstbier replied that 'I think that the friendship that was established years ago will now benefit both countries'.⁴⁰ Even so,

³⁵ *International Herald Tribune*, 4 January 1990.

³⁶ Anna Sabbat-Swidlicka, 'Havel in Poland: Beyond Bilateral Relations', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 7 (16 February 1990), p. 37.

³⁷ Jiří Dienstbier, 'Central Europe's Security', *Foreign Policy* 83 (Summer 1991), p. 121.

³⁸ Speech to the National Assembly, on 22 December 1918, reproduced in George J. Kovtun, (ed.), *The Spirit of Thomas G. Masaryk (1850-1937). An Anthology* (London: Macmillan in association with the Masaryk Publications Trust, 1990), p. 197.

³⁹ See, for example, the interviews with Bronislav Geremek and even General Wojciech Jaruzelski in *Lidové noviny*.

⁴⁰ *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21 December 1989, in *FBIS*, 2 January 1990.

Dienstbier was opposed to the idea of federations generally. He wrote 'the creation of a military-political minibloc or the formation of confederations or similar entities offers no greater promise of stability'.⁴¹

Confederation aside, even basic forms of co-operation between Czechoslovakia and Poland seemed in fact to have deteriorated after 1989. Cultural contacts apparently disappeared, with Polish newspapers no longer available in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak leaders were also criticised for tardiness in opening the Czechoslovak-Polish frontier.⁴²

Bilateral relations between the two countries continued to develop, with agreements on economic co-operation and settlement of outstanding debts,⁴³ as well as military co-operation,⁴⁴ but any notion of confederation received little public or political support. Prague's inability to keep the Czechoslovak federation together after the June 1992 elections underscored the unlikelihood of that country forming a federation with any other country.

Czechoslovak-Polish relations demonstrated that there were limitations to the extent to which Czechoslovakia was willing to integrate with a neighbour. It made this calculation not on the basis of common cultural identity or as an antidote to regional tensions, but on the practical implications to itself of such an arrangement.

Hungary and Regional Relations

Hungary, like Poland, undertook to co-operate with its other immediate neighbours, both on a multilateral and, in the case of Austria in

⁴¹ Dienstbier, 'Central Europe's Security', p. 122.

⁴² See the letter to the editor, 'Polsko a My', *Lidové noviny*.

⁴³ See for example, the agreement signed on 14 December 1990; reported in *Lidové noviny*, 15 December 1990.

⁴⁴ Discussed in the section on regional military arrangements, below.

particular, on a bilateral basis. Multilateral cooperation included the Alpen-Adria Working Group, initiated in 1978. Conceived as a sub-state forum, it originally consisted of five Austrian *Länder*, three Western provinces of Hungary, four northern regions of Italy and Bavaria. The Group sought to develop regional co-operation on matters including 'tourism, energy, the environment, transport, sport and culture'.⁴⁵

On 11 November 1989, in the wake of the breeching of the Berlin Wall, the Alpen-Adria Foreign Ministers met in Budapest and announced the creation of a larger, national- rather than regional-based entity. Czechoslovakia entered the Group in May 1990 and a heads of government meeting was convened in July and, in recognition of the Italian impetus behind the creation of the Group, it adopted the name *Pentagonale*. Thereafter, Poland also joined, resulting in the name *Hexagonale*.

The Czechoslovak government's use of geography in the foreign policy of regional relations is evident on its view of the competing bodies of the Pentagonal Group and the Baltic Council. 'For some time, Czechoslovakia was hesitant about Poland's intended participation' in the *Pentagonale*, due in part because Czechoslovakia sought 'to play the profitable role of middle-man between the Danube/Adriatic commonwealth and the envisaged commonwealth of the Baltic states, which included Poland'.⁴⁶ Havel was seen as suggesting Poland's admission and of proposing *both* the Baltic and *Hexagonale* cooperation so that 'Czechoslovakia, conveniently situated, would be the geographical and cultural link between the two'.⁴⁷ Because the Baltic Council and the Alpen-Adria Community were explicitly organised around geographic commonalities they tended to exclude Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia,

⁴⁵ *The Economist*, 13 July 1991.

⁴⁶ Zielonka, *Security*, p. 42.

⁴⁷ Interview with Havel, *The Financial Times*, 19 March 1990.

however, not only recognised this fact, but first undertook to gain membership and then to use its own position to its advantage.

While the *Pentagonale* was inspired by the legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it was also meant to serve as a geopolitical tool. Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis said regional groups such as the *Pentagonale* were not at odds with the Helsinki Process.⁴⁸ But, nevertheless, he said the *Pentagonale* 'was to serve as a vehicle for Italian influence as well as a barrier to German expansion into post-communist Central Europe'.⁴⁹ An editorial in the generally pro-*leadership* Czech daily *Lidové noviny* also commented that the Pentagonal Group was a counterweight to united Germany, a striking suggestion in view of Havel's unanxious attitude to the impact of German unification on Czechoslovakia.⁵⁰

The lack of development in these organisations in the duration of the Czechoslovak federation meant that they did not pose direct challenges to Prague. The Baltic Council failed to institutionalise itself in the period under study, thereby avoiding a situation whereby Poland would have divided its loyalty between two regional organisations. This served Czechoslovakia, as Havel could consent to the inclusion of Poland in the *Pentagonale*. Thus, Czechoslovakia was able to retain a position of geographic middleman and potentially to reinforce its position in the region by making use of its central location.

Havel may have been inspired in his plans for regional cooperation by humanist notions and by imagined ideals of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Nevertheless, Czechoslovak policy also indicated a recognition of several geographic contingencies. First, Czechoslovakia sought to avoid

⁴⁸ *Rudé právo*, 27 April 1991.

⁴⁹ *The Economist*, 13 July 1991.

⁵⁰ *Lidové noviny*, 23 May 1990.

exclusion or isolation, this seeking membership in organisations which operated in geographic vicinities which did not immediately include Czechoslovakia, such as the Baltic or the Alpen-Adria. Second, some have suggested that Czechoslovakia sought to create a regional role for itself by being the middle ground between such regional organisations. Third, Czechoslovakia's hesitation regarding federation with Poland, despite close personal contacts between the two national leaderships and historical pedigree to the idea, stemmed from a fear of being overwhelmed by a demographically and territorially larger state. Thus, Czechoslovakia's regional relations operated on a basis of certain ideas as well as an awareness of geographic limitations and possibilities.

The origins and operation of what is considered the most successful form of post-Communist regional relations further demonstrates the combination of these tendencies. The chapter now turns to the Visegrád Group.

IDEAS, GEOGRAPHY AND THE VISEGRÁD GROUP

What became known as the Visegrád Group or Visegrád Triangle was considered the most successful form of post-Communist regional cooperation. Observers have called it the 'most influential' of the new regional groupings, 'the most significant attempt at regional cooperation in East Central Europe to date', and said that it 'marked an entirely new kind of security mechanism'.⁵¹ The Declaration of the Visegrád Summit of 15 February 1991 auspiciously proclaimed 'a new pattern of relations in Central Europe'. Its aims were ambitious, if not also somewhat idealistic,

⁵¹ Adrian Hyde-Price, *The International Politics of East Central Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 122; and Joshua Spero, 'The Budapest-Prague-Warsaw Triangle', *European Security* Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 1992), p. 58.

including the transcendence of ethnic hatred and political rivalry that characterised Central Europe:

Building on the most important elements of the European tradition, a society of people, working together in harmony, must be brought about which, supported by individual national identities, is committed to universal human values. This society - free of hatred, nationalism, xenophobia, and hostility to its neighbours - is tolerant towards the individual, the family, and towards local, regional, and national communities.⁵²

Havel expressed his hopes for cooperation between Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia in his address to the Polish *Sejm*: 'Before us is a historic opportunity to fill a large political vacuum created in Central Europe after the fall of the Hapsburgs'. He proposed that a 'federation' be created, although he added, that it was not yet known what shape it might take. He then drew parallels with Central European dissident solidarity and said that instead of competing against one another for Western institutional memberships, 'we should do just the opposite: help each other in the spirit of that solidarity with which in worse times you protested against our repression and we against yours'.⁵³

Such references to dissident solidarity, however, existed alongside Czechoslovakia's concern that geography might work against it. Czechoslovakia issued a memorandum in February 1990 which was seen as establishing the basis for Visegrád cooperation. The memorandum's first aim, however, was to achieve the country's membership in the Alpen-Adria group.⁵⁴

In his January 1990 addresses to the Polish and Hungarian Parliaments, Havel called for the three countries, along with Italy and Austria as observers, to meet in Bratislava. A meeting was held in the

⁵² 'Declaration of the Cooperation of the Republic of Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republic and the Republic of Poland on the Road to European Integration', in *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 2, No. 9 (1 March 1991), pp. 31-2.

⁵³ *International Herald Tribune*, 26 January 1990.

⁵⁴ Tökés, 'From Visegrád,' p. 103.

Slovak capital in April 1990. There were no tangible results from it, although this was more the result of problems specific to that meeting rather than the inability of Central European cooperation to occur. The ability of the meeting to generate meaningful results was hampered because of differences in the types of representatives sent. Poland was represented by Communist General Jaruzelski who had not yet vacated the Presidency to Lech Walesa. The Hungarian delegation was headed by reform Communists who had just been defeated in that country's first free post-Communist elections.

The meeting was considered a hastily arranged affair. As one commentator wrote, 'The host country did not have much of an agenda, the Italian and the Austrian spokesmen did not have much to say, and the "born-again democrat", then Hungarian foreign minister Gyula Horn said even less...'.⁵⁵ Others noted that the meeting was marred by personality conflicts. For all these problems, however, it began the process of sustained regional consultation, one not paralleled by any other regional formation.

Whatever the impetus, the meetings of officials became more regular, the military, economic and political affairs of the three being discussed jointly throughout later 1990 and 1991, paving the way for more senior meetings. In February 1991, the three national leaders convened for a meeting which was officially called a Summit. It was held in the traditional residence of Hungarian kings, whereupon Havel's 'Bratislava Process' took the name of the location as its own and became the Visegrád Group.

The Visegrád Summit saw a joint declaration by the three pledging mutual support for membership in West European institutions. Stressing that the three countries belonged to the cultural and political traditions of Western Europe, the Declaration:

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* For a Czech account, see *Lidové noviny*, 10 April 1990.

It is the conviction of the signatory state that their cooperation, in view of the political, economic, and social challenges facing them and in view of their efforts for renewal on a democratic basis, is an important step towards the integration of the whole of Europe.⁵⁶

Thus, not only were the Visegrád countries historical descendants of European historical developments, they were also contributing to the realisation of Europe's political destiny.

A second 'summit' of Presidents and senior Ministers was held in Kraków on 5-6 October 1991.⁵⁷ A third Summit was held in Prague in May 1992, and was considered by some to have been the most successful.⁵⁸ Again, the Group's communiqué spoke of 'a new pattern of relations' in the region.

In April 1992 agreement in principle was achieved among the Triangle for a Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). Negotiations proceeded slowly in the course of that year but were concluded in December. Asked in September 1995 the extent to which the spirit of Visegrád cooperation still existed, Dienstbier exclaimed 'Look at CEFTA: Visgrád lives!'⁵⁹ But, as we shall see, it is precisely the limitations on CEFTA that illustrate the geopolitical limitations of Central European cooperation.

GEOPOLITICS AND VISEGRÁD COOPERATION

As much as the antecedents for regional cooperation came from the region itself, the motivation and the impetus for it came from the recognition by

⁵⁶ 'Declaration of the Cooperation of the Republic of Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republic and the Republic of Poland on the Road to European Integration', in *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 2, No. 9 (1 March 1991), pp. 31-2.

⁵⁷ See Jan B. de Weydenthal, 'The Cracow Summit', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 2, No. 43 (25 October 1991), pp. 27-9.

⁵⁸ Hyde-Price, *International Politics*, p. 125.

⁵⁹ Interview with Dienstbier.

its leaders of the influence of outside forces. The extent and nature of regional cooperation in defence, economics and political lobbying was overwhelmingly conditioned by these influences.

Defence and Security Policy

The Visegrád Group co-operation was encouraged by their recognition of threats from the Soviet Union as demonstrated by the Baltic crackdown of January 1991 and the August Coup. Indeed, it was suggested that the impetus for Visegrád may even have come out of Soviet multilateral structures. The inspiration for cooperation did not come from the group itself, for all of Havel's intentions. Instead, ironically, some would maintain that it was not the Bratislava Meeting itself, but rather the 7 June 1990 WTO meeting in Moscow which 'gave birth to what became the working trilateral relationship...'. This was due, first, to Hungarian Prime Minister Antall's 'courageous decision to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact, Poles and Czechoslovaks had the opportunity to experience firsthand what political will can accomplish in face of expected Soviet opposition. Second, work in the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee between June and November 1990 brought the three states together in a negotiating environment that enabled them to clarify the commonalities in their security needs and juxtapose those needs to those of Moscow'.⁶⁰

Later events in the Soviet Union underscored for the Central European states their common exposure and weakness, and made them more will to cooperate. As discussed in chapter 5, in January 1991, Soviet security forces, attacked nationalist protestors in Vilnius and Riga, starkly suggesting that the Soviet Union was reverting to the violent suppression of independence movements. The three Central European

⁶⁰ Tökés, 'From Visegrád', pp. 103-04.

Foreign Ministers convened a meeting in Budapest on 21 January in response to these events. It was then that 'the decision to firm up the agenda for the Visegrád summit was made'.⁶¹

The Baltic crackdown also changed Czechoslovak policy toward the Soviet Union, which brought its position more in line with Hungary's, thereby aiding the creation of a common position. Reversing its previous willingness to extend humanist principles to the Gorbachev leadership, Czechoslovakia declared clearly its intention to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact. As will be discussed in chapter 7, Prague had originally expected the Warsaw Pact to evolve from a military into a political organisation, which with NATO could then be collapsed into a pan-European security system.

In this context, the Czechoslovak government made use of the shared geopolitical concerns of the Visegrád Group to achieve its objectives. After consultations in Budapest with his two counterparts on 21 January 1991, Dienstbier announced that they were pressing for a new meeting with Moscow to end the Pact, which the Soviet Union had postponed since November 1990.⁶² Visegrád Group cooperation was also considered to have been significant, although not to as great an extent as for the Warsaw Pact, in achieving the termination of the CMEA.⁶³

Because of their reaction to Soviet policy, the Visegrád Three coordinated their position on larger military-political issues. For example, the joint proposals of the Three for the division of WTO conventional weapons authorised for the whole bloc under the CFE Treaty were

⁶¹ 'Hungarian, Polish, CSFR Foreign Ministers Meet', Budapest Domestic Service, 21 January 1991, *FBIS*, 25 January 1991, p. 1.

⁶² See 'Soviet Union Pressed for Early Talks on Fate of Warsaw Pact', *The Financial Times*, 22 January 1991.

⁶³ Tökés, 'From Visegrád', p. 106. Also see *TASS*, 27 February 1991, in *FBIS-SOV*, March 1, 1991, p. 3.

credited as 'instrumental in overcoming the eleventh-hour Soviet intransigence that threatened these negotiations'.⁶⁴

The 'August Coup' of 1991 also provided a stimulus to regional cooperation. An emergency meeting of Deputy Ministers and other senior officials was convened in Warsaw on 20 August, with the result that 'the decisions were prompt and firm'. A summit meeting was to be held the next day (which was subsequently rescheduled for October once the coup disintegrated). Official trilateral structures were created in the form of the deputy ministerial Standing Committee to coordinate the Three, particularly on security issues, as well as a working group on migration in anticipation of a mass influx of refugees from the USSR. 'The meeting also agreed on the principal points of letters that Walesa, Havel and Antall were to send to the EC and other Western leaders'. The impact of the coup on regional cooperation continued with other measures enacted 'to widen and deepen trilateral cooperation'. Czechoslovak Defense Minister Luboš Dobrovský said that the Visegrád Group countries were going to 'coordinate all military activities, including modernizing the military equipment of the Czechoslovak, Polish, and Hungarian militaries'.⁶⁵ Thus, the impetus for cooperation came from the need to 'co-operate on economics and security - not least to give them stronger bargaining powers in dealings with the Soviet Union'.⁶⁶

Only when external influences prompted military cooperation among the Visegrád countries did they act together trilaterally in a meaningful way. Otherwise, they sought bilateral military agreements, and this was out of geopolitical recognition of their position in Europe. Certainly, there were occasions of trilateral discussions. In September 1990, for example,

⁶⁴ Douglas L. Clarke, 'Central Europe: Military Cooperation in the Triangle', RFE/RL, *Research Report*, 10 January 1992.

⁶⁵ *Rzeczpospolita* 9 September 1991, in *FBIS*, 16 Sept. 1991, pp. 12-13.

⁶⁶ *The Economist*, 13 July 1991.

the civilian deputy Defense Ministers of the three countries held consultations in the southern Polish city of Zakopane. At Visegrád, the three Presidents agreed to confer on defense matters. At Kraków on 2 August 1991, Defense Ministers finalised a proposal to coordinate defense, just in time that an emergency meeting could be held less than three weeks later in order to develop jointly responses to the Soviet coup.

Central European officials, however, were keenly sensitive to the geopolitical limits of their co-operation. At the Kraków meeting of Visegrád Defense Ministers 2 August 1991, Dobrovský qualified their initiative, stating that the meeting did not signify the establishment of a 'military minibloc' but rather 'an agreement on co-ordinated activity of the three countries' armies'. To underscore the functional limitations placed on military co-operation, it was announced that the three countries would not undertake joint military exercises. Dobrovský added that the agreement resulting from the Summit was predominantly concerned with economic matters.⁶⁷ More tellingly, the three countries only signed bilateral military agreements. When there was any suggestion of a formal trilateral military cooperation, Czechoslovak officials were quick to reiterate that formal military cooperation was strictly bilateral.⁶⁸

The explanation for this behaviour lay in the region's perceptions of how both NATO and the Soviet Union viewed Central European security cooperation. By 1991, Czechoslovakia, along with both Poland and Hungary, sought formal security guarantees from the West. But they were cognisant of NATO's hesitation about offering such a guarantee, let alone extending formal Alliance membership to them. Creating an effective military

⁶⁷ ČTK 2 August 1991, in *SWB*, 10 August 1991.

⁶⁸ Response to author's paper at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 7 March 1992, by Dr Svatopluk Buchlovský, Director of the European Security Department, Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry.

structure of their own would doubtless have removed the pressure on NATO to offer a meaningful security guarantee.

From the Soviet Union's viewpoint, an integrated military structure in Central Europe, keen on membership in NATO, represented a threat on its doorstep. For these reasons, then, Czechoslovak officials were adamant that military agreements in Central Europe were strictly bilateral, and did not amount to any sort of 'bloc'.

Economics

Shortly after the 1989 revolutions Western countries encouraged regional economic cooperation. On 7 February 1990, US Secretary of State James Baker delivered a well-crafted speech at Charles University in Prague. He said the United States welcomed the discussions on economic co-operation, and he lauded the possibility of a free-trade agreement, facilitating unrestricted movement of capital and labour, the development of corresponding financial systems, and the introduction of a convertible accounting unit. 'Economic integration', he explicated, 'can enhance efficiency and growth. Common infrastructure projects can assure compatible communication, transport, and energy networks'.⁶⁹ Despite Western efforts to advance the benefits of economic cooperation for its own sake, domestic political agendas and economic realities meant that economic synchronisation would be limited and that agreements were largely the result of outside pressures.

Thus, as with defence, co-operation among the Visegrád Three was limited by considerations emanating from outside the region. Janos Czibula, departmental head in the Hungarian Ministry of International Economic Relations, said that any free trade agreement among the three

⁶⁹ Baker, 7 February 1990, p. 10.

countries must concur with the present negotiations of the three with the EC.⁷⁰ This might have reflected Hungary's hesitation to become too closely aligned to countries it deemed economically weaker.⁷¹

An announcement was made in April 1992 that the three would begin preparations for creating a 'new free trade area', with the three Foreign Ministers to meet in Budapest later in that year to 'remove trade barriers'.⁷² A long and slow process of negotiation began, which surprised observers when it finally resulted in agreement in December 1991.⁷³ Again, concern was that success in this realm, if indeed achievable, would undermine the efforts of the Visegrád Group to gain EC membership.

The Central European Free Trade Agreement has been called the 'first truly pragmatic measure' by the Visegrád group.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, none of its provisions exceed the demands or expectations that membership in the EC would dictate. Again, the extent of regional cooperation was motivated by outside conditioning. The lack of regional impetus was evident from the fact that no measures were taken to exceed the scope or timing of regional economic cooperation that external pressure prescribed.

Lobbying

⁷⁰ MTI, 26 July 1991, in *SWB*, 8 August 1991.

⁷¹ By contrast, Poland favoured greater trilateral economic cooperation, for example, wanting proposed trilateral economic agreements to become effective by 1 January 1992.

⁷² *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 April 1992.

⁷³ Karoly Okolicsanyi, 'The Visegrad Traingle's Free-Trade Zone', *RFE/RL Research Report* Vol. 2, no. 3 (15 January 1993), pp. 19-22.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Cooperation in security and economy illustrated the impact of outside influences on the extent of regional cooperation. Group efforts proved beneficial in aspects of lobbying, particularly in relation to the EC and the CSCE. The benefits of concerted efforts by the Visegrád group in gaining better or quicker concessions from the EC are difficult to judge. The thinking within the EC itself and within the governments and the publics of its member states on the breath and depth of EC membership was often equivocal or mercurial. The pragmatism of Central European cooperation, particularly in relations with West European institutions, coincided with Havel's references to a supranational Central European culture. To the Polish *Sejm*, Havel stated 'If we were to return to Europe individually it would certainly take much longer and it would be much more complicated than if we act together'.⁷⁵ This proved to be a tactical and realistic assessment, as the EC sought to retain barriers on Central Europe's three most competitive exports: textiles, steel, and agriculture produce. Coordinated bargaining by the Three was credited with successes in the negotiations with the EC.

Joint lobbying was also a feature in Czechoslovak policy towards the CSCE. Under Havel, Czechoslovakia saw the CSCE as a crucial institution. The potential to use the CSCE as a European-wide forum was advocated by several states, including some from Central and Eastern Europe.

Czechoslovakia harnessed the Visegrád Group in order to add voices to its aims. This is not to say that the three countries had inherently different objectives, but this organisation, based on perceptions of geopolitics, allowed for synchronised external policies. One such example was their proposal for Japan to be granted observer status at the CSCE. At the 6 May 1992 Visegrád meeting of Central European Presidents, Antall

⁷⁵ *International Herald Tribune*, 26 January 1990.

and Walesa 'expressed their support for the Czechoslovak idea of associate membership for Japan, and the three countries also intended to raise at the CSCE the idea of forming CSCE peace-keeping units, possibly using NATO resources'.⁷⁶ The Czechoslovak leadership pursued its vision of European security through bilateral talks with major powers, it also mobilised the Visegrád Group to that end as well.

OBSTACLES OVERCOME TO MAKE THE VISEGRÁD GROUP WORK

An assessment of the numerous challenges which the Visegrád Group had to overcome in order to achieve its successes helps to determine how important dissident ideas and an understanding of geography were to its operation. As Timothy Garton Ash wrote in mid-July 1990, 'between Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the present reality is as much that of competition as it is of co-operation; the fact that they have common problems does not necessarily mean they have common solutions'.⁷⁷

Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy

Each of these countries pursued its own domestic agenda. While sharing the legacy of socialist rule, each sought to do in a somewhat different way. Post-Communist Poland and Hungary were both described, perhaps acceptably, as 'deeply self-absorbed' a fact which did 'not bode good for the broad Czechoslovak vision' advanced by Havel.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Summary of Radio Czechoslovakia broadcasts [date and time not given], in *SWB*, 8 May 1992.

⁷⁷ Timothy Garton Ash, 'Blindly Smitten by Democracy: Central Europeans Attracted by Change May Not Foresee All The Dangers', *The Independent*, 5 July 1990.

⁷⁸ Interview with Havel, *The Guardian*, 15 September 1990.

Havel called in January 1990 for a united approach to Western institutional memberships, a policy endorsed by subsequent Visegrád declarations. Nevertheless, domestic agendas dictated a level of competition among the Three. While the Hungarian daily *Magyar Nemzet* noted that the three Central European countries had no 'systematic anomaly' and therefore the Visegrád Group 'might have better prospects' than the varied Pentagone,⁷⁹ Hungary saw itself as economically more advanced than Poland or Czechoslovakia, and therefore eligible for earlier membership in the EC. In addition, while apparently interested in regional economic co-operation, Hungarian officials were quick to indicate the economic insignificance of co-operation. For example, Hungary's International Economic Relations Minister Bela Kádár was asked to what extent Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia had prepared for a currency or customs agreement. He replied: 'We have moved closer in political cooperation with these two countries - indeed, we have a kind of Central European common fate at play - but we must clearly see that the share of Czechoslovakia and Poland in Hungary's foreign trade was hardly 5 percent in 1990 and will not be greater this year [1991] either; rather, if anything, it will be less'.⁸⁰

Another example of a national priority undermining regional cooperation was the dispute between Hungary and Czechoslovakia over the Gabčíkovo-Nagymoros dam. The Hungarian withdrawal from the vast 1977 hydroelectric project 'jeopardise[d] the new relationship' of the Visegrád Group. In addition to the ecological and indeed national question the dam provoked (physically slicing apart the Hungarian minority of southern

⁷⁹ *Magyar Nemzet*, 2 March 1992, cited in Haba, 'Central European', p. 71.

⁸⁰ KR, 7 July 1991, in *FBIS*, 8 July 1991.

Slovakia), the resulting diversion of the Danube also threatened a *de facto* revision of the Hungarian-Slovak border.⁸¹

As we saw earlier, the success of the Bratislava meeting in April 1990 was hampered by the mix of old Communists and new dissidents present as representatives. Even among former dissidents, however, personality problems caused difficult relations, as occurred between Havel and Walesa. A biographer of Havel anticipated in September 1990 that were Walesa to become the Polish president, 'the chemistry at bilateral head of state level will be almost unworkable.'⁸²

Walesa was apparently jealous that Havel became Czechoslovak president already in December 1989 merely by an uncontested vote in the Federal Assembly, while Walesa, was forced to await Jaruzelski's resignation in September 1990 and then face a national vote.⁸³

Personality differences emerged when Havel visited Poland on 25 January 1990. According to one organiser of Havel's trip, he had limited time and could only go Warsaw. Walesa refused to travel from Gdansk to meet him, despite the pleading of close associates and members of the Czechoslovak-Polish solidarity movement of the 1980s. The inability of Walesa and Havel to co-operate became well-known, if not also an embarrassment to both countries.⁸⁴

Lack of personal cooperation appeared to affect not only relations between Prague and Warsaw. Personal relations between post-Communist Czechoslovak leaders and their Hungarian counterparts were not as intense as those with their Polish counterparts. The Hungarian Havel

⁸¹ See Richard Owen, 'Hungary Risks Breach with Prague After Abandoning Dam', *The Times*, 21 May 1992.

⁸² Michael Simmons interview with Havel, *The Guardian*, 15 September 1990.

⁸³ For a critical account of Walesa's self-importance, see the biography by his former spokesman: Jaroslaw Kurski, *Lech Walesa: Democrat or Dictator?* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

⁸⁴ Interview with Fialková-Němcová. See also, *The Times*, 19 February 1991.

knew best and with whom he met personally during 1990 was the exiled writer Konrád, who was not directly involved in Hungarian policy-making.

Whatever co-operation the three countries achieved, it was unlikely to have been the result of personal loyalties or understanding.

Resurgent Nationalism

The Visegrád Declaration had the specific aim of transcending Central Europe's nationalistic and xenophobic tendencies. But it was precisely this legacy that hindered and ultimately undermined regional cooperation.

While in name, international Communism sought to transcend national identities, it in fact divided the peoples of Eastern Europe. This enforced isolation meant that 'the old stereotypes of the inter-war period have, to a large extent, been preserved. In the present period, these manifest themselves in the attitude of "let each country save itself as best it can"'.⁸⁵

The noted Slovak dissident Miroslav Kusý observed before the 1989 Revolutions 'So far, no spontaneous grassroots process of integration has happened since the war (in any sense comparable with the West European integration process) and each of us secretly hopes that it never will in the near future. Our mutual national antagonisms are still sufficiently alive as to push us in the opposite direction. Your average Slovak still finds the idea of a closer territorial union with Hungary unthinkable. Czechs and Poles are hardly going to form a community with the Germans, but then nor are the Czechs and Slovaks with the Poles, for that matter...'.⁸⁶ Even contacts through tourism, 'the universally accepted means for different nations to get to know each other', had a negative

⁸⁵ Vogel, 'CMEA', p. 66.

⁸⁶ Kusý, 'We, Central-European East Europeans', in Schöpflin and Wood, (eds), p. 92.

effect on the nations of the region. Continued Kusý, 'The actual effect is the contrary: sharpened mutual hostility and the entrenchment of our division'.⁸⁷ When interviewed for this study, Kusý called the above piece 'old', but evidence suggests that such an assessment is not outdated.

Some commentators may have exaggerated the threat of nationalism in post-Communist Central Europe. The very existence of a Hungarian diaspora alarms some, despite Budapest's denial of revisionist ambitions.⁸⁸ Others have stated, not entirely correctly, that right-wing extremist parties have done well in all of the Visegrád countries.⁸⁹ Some of the issues discussed above, like the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam, have been cast by Western observers in nationalist terms.⁹⁰ Even though other commentators suggested optimistically in 1990 that the region could overcome its traditional problems of nationalism,⁹¹ this is a feature of the region which presents substantial challenge to meaningful cooperation. Havel was certainly aware of the problems of racism and nationalism. He condemned specifically the 'fascist-like hatred' of his countrymen of gypsies and Vietnamese in 1990 and generally observed manifestations of racism and xenophobia.⁹² Central European cooperation was achieved despite nationalistic constraints.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 96 and 95.

⁸⁸ Paul Lendvai, 'What about the Hungarian Minorities?', *The World Today* Vol. 48, No. 12 (December 1992), pp. 215-6.

⁸⁹ Thomas S. Szayna, 'Ultra-Nationalism in Central Europe', *Orbis* Vol. 37, No. 4 (Fall 1993), p. 527.

⁹⁰ Vera Rich, 'The Battle of the Danube', *The World Today* Vol. 48, No. 12 (December 1992), pp. 215-7.

⁹¹ István Deák, 'Uncovering Eastern Europe's Dark History', *Orbis* Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter 1990), p. 65.

⁹² Havel, 'Post-Communist Nightmare', p. 8.

The impact of nationalism on regional cooperation was no more clearly demonstrated than with the breakup of Czechoslovakia.⁹³ The frailty and artificiality of the 'Czechoslovak' nation was exposed with the geopolitical shifts brought by Nazi aggression in 1939. Arguably, the country was retained as a unified entity after the Second World by the anaesthetising effect of Communism on nationalist aspirations in Eastern Europe. Once that lid was removed, the differences within the country resurfaced.

The June 1992 elections in Czechoslovakia resulted in the election of leaders in the two constituent republics who had unreconcilable views of the transition to a market economy. As Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, the market-oriented Václav Klaus made clear that regional cooperation was actually a hindrance to the Czech Republic's overall economic performance.

Whatever the results of Havel's efforts to generate a common Central European policy on seeking Western institutional memberships, after June 1992 Klaus discontinued such thinking.⁹⁴

Remarkably, also, with the split of Czechoslovakia, some participants in the Polish-Czechoslovak solidarity of the 1980s and supporters of post-Communist regional cooperation believed that it could not function because Poland had become relatively too big.⁹⁵ Thus, the notion of supranational identity and cooperation had been stunted by *realpolitik* calculations of size and power.

⁹³ Jeffrey Simon, 'Czechoslovakia's "Velvet Divorce", Visegrad Cohesion, and European Faultlines', *European Security* Vol. 3, No. 3 (Autumn 1994), pp. 482-500. For the breakup generally, see Bibliography, section 16.

⁹⁴ See chapter 3.

⁹⁵ Interview with Fialková-Němcová, 13 September 1995.

Regional relations were the result of Havel's recognition of geographic possibilities and limitations, as well as dissident thinking and experience. It is the one area of post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy on which both selection and execution of policy was based on geographic factors, and as a result, Havel was able to make some of Czechoslovakia's most important foreign policy achievements. And this was in face of other obstacles, including competing domestic agendas and personality conflicts among the Visegrád leaders. Central European leaders shaped their policies around how they understood Western and Soviet governments to view their geopolitical place in Europe. Thus, not even the semblance of formal trilateral military cooperation was permitted for fear of alarming the Soviet Union or of relieving NATO of any sense of responsibility towards the region.

The construct of a regional foreign policy and its use in wider affairs denotes a recognition of the uses and limitations of geography. The specific use of geography as the basis for policy is, however, unusual in Central Europe. Precisely because the region has always lacked geographic boundaries it has usually been defined by cultural terms, particularly the German and Austrian conceptions of *Mitteleuropa*. One of the assumptions of Czechoslovak policy towards its Central European neighbours was that the idea of a shared historical legacy would help to outweigh or even overcome negative features and traditions of the region's history. It is laudable that the attempt was made. Ironically, one of the greatest misunderstandings of that legacy was the impermanence of Czechoslovakia itself, which then had a profound impact on the functioning of the Visegrád Group.

Suggesting that the impetuses for regional cooperation and any tangible results arising from it were conditioned by forces external to the region is not to imply that this is unusual. If one accepts cooperation as an anomaly rather than the usual in the international, then the logical

expectation is that circumstance forces cooperation. Military cooperation never developed into a 'bloc' (were it even possible) because this was seen as counterproductive to the region's relations with both Western Europe and the Soviet Union. Even more remarkable, the provisions of CEFTA went no further than the conditions of the Association Agreements required. Cooperation thus did not exceed what outside forces demanded or would tolerate.

Nevertheless, the originators of Visegrád cooperation, and many analysts, have suggested that it represented a new form of cooperation in Central Europe. It can only be considered a new form of cooperation to the extent that the motivations for its birth and subsequent successes and failures were influenced so considerably by outside forces. The rhetorical emphasis on the qualitative novelty of Visegrád cooperation may be the only enduring feature of Czechoslovakia's idealism in its regional policy.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLEMENTING IDEAS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF GEOPOLITICS FROM THE SECOND 'NEW EUROPE'

One of Josef Lada's cartoons illustrating *The Good Soldier Švejk* features the incapacitated Czech character being pushed in a wheelchair, flailing his crutches, and exclaiming his intention to enlist in the Austro-Hungarian Army to fight in the Great War.¹ The original cartoon was reproduced in a December 1990 issue of the intellectual newspaper *Literární noviny*; now, however, instead of declaring 'To Belgrade, to Belgrade', the dilapidated Švejk proclaims 'To Europe'.²

Rather than seeing itself or its citizens as unfit to rejoin Europe, the post-Communist Czechoslovak government asserted the country's rightful place in it. Accordingly, like Masaryk's aims for the 'New Europe' after the First World War,³ Havel's proposals for a second New Europe after 1989 were ambitious and far-reaching. These proposals illustrated the overall 'civic' nature of Havel's foreign policy: to redemocratise European politics and security. This was to be done in principle through the elimination of power politics and an emphasis on the rule of law and respect for human rights, and in practice by stressing the institutions which the Czechoslovak leadership believed represented and embodied these values, particularly the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as the Council of Europe and the European Community. According to the post-Communist Czechoslovak leadership, NATO and the WTO should be transformed into political entities, and then collapsed into an invigorated Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE),

¹ The cartoon appears in the chapter 'Švejk jde na vojnu', in Jaroslav Hašek, *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války* (Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1990), part 1, p. 72.

² *Literární noviny*, 13 December 1990.

³ See chapter 1.

which would be transformed into a pan-European post-security structure.

These aims were complex and both their content and the strategy used to achieve them were compelled to change during the time under study. Because of the changing conditions, this chapter will first offer an account of the post-Communist Czechoslovak leadership's proposals for the New Europe. It will then discuss Czechoslovakia's positions on the various main institutions. Thereafter the interconnections of these policies and the problems that arose will be considered.

Much literature has been generated to contemplate post-Cold War European security. It is not the aim of this chapter to summarise, critique or advance on this material. While the chapter draws on such literature in order to offer contrasts of opinions and perceptions, the emphasis rests on the Czechoslovak conception of the 'New' Europe and how it was forced to change in form and content.

It is also not meant to suggest here that Western institutions, primarily the EC and NATO and associated structures, projected different policies towards Czechoslovakia than to its Central European neighbours. As the chapter on regional relations demonstrated, there was at least a tacit, if not an overt understanding, between the Visegrád Group and Western organisations that the three countries were to be considered collectively and to advance joint positions.

PAN-EUROPEAN STRUCTURES: IDEAS AND THEIR ORIGINS

The contributions of the Havel-Dienstbier leadership to debates on post-Cold War Europe surpassed what might be expected from a small country and made Czechoslovakia a disproportionately vocal participator in those debates. Havel was also seen as the East European leader 'who forced the

issue of security' for his region by advocating the reform and enhancement of the CSCE.⁴

This was particularly striking because East European dissidents generally neither contemplated foreign affairs nor were prepared for them when they assumed office:

The new leaders were distinguished playwrights, journalists, labor leaders, museum directors, and even university professors, who had courageously resisted communist regimes, but who, for obvious reasons, paid little attention to the future of their countries, to their respective place in the European and world order, and, last but not least, to their foreign policy and security concerns and dilemmas.⁵

By contrast, general issues of the Cold War and the Cold War division of Europe had been debated among Czechoslovakia dissidents since the 1970s. The Czech author Milan Kundera sparked debate on the fate of Central Europe and its historical, political and cultural place in Europe with his 1983 essay 'Un occident kidnappé - ou la tragédie de l'Europe centrale'.⁶ Dienstbier was made post-Communist Foreign Minister because of his interest and work in world politics.

Dissident debate in Communist Czechoslovakia also drew upon the historical example of the efforts of the First Republic to secure a new, democratic, peaceable Europe. Jaroslav Šabata, who was known to have influenced Dienstbier's thinking on world affairs, wrote in November 1988:

Masaryk's important memorandum from the end of the First World War, entitled 'The New Europe (A Slavonic Standpoint)' is still today a remarkable testimony as to how European political thinking worked its way towards an understanding of the new era at a time when a crisis had already broken out at one of its extremes. Masaryk addressed his memorandum to the Peace Congress. He concentrated on trying to work out ways in which Eastern Europe (and therefore Europe as a whole) could be reorganized along

⁴ Sarah Helm, 'NATO Resists East European Request for Protection', *The Independent*, 27 April 1991.

⁵ Andrzej Korbonski, 'Facing the Legacy of Post-Stalinist Regimes', in Jacob Kipp (ed.), *Central European Security Concerns* (London: Frank Cass, 1993), p. 44.

⁶ Published in English as 'The Tragedy of Central Europe', *The New York Review of Books*, 26 April 1984, pp. 33-8.

democratic lines; on ways in which the political freedom of all nations could be ensured....⁷

It is not the specific content of either Masaryk's proposal or of Sabata's reference to it that is relevant here, if only because Masaryk's proposals were also aimed at the restraint of Germany. The significance lies in the continuity of interwar ideals and of Czechoslovak dissident concern with global politics.

The existence of such debate does not mean that world politics were central to Czechoslovak dissident discussions or that a coherent programme was created or that all of the dissidents agreed with it. Milan Šimečka was derogatory about the role of European affairs in independent Czechoslovak debate:

What to the West looks like the ebb and flow of a dark threatening tide or an alternating pattern of Cold War and detente actually feels to us in the East like an alternating pattern of brutal and less brutal forms of political culture, and the ebb and flow of the internal frustrations of the system we inhabit. This is about the extent of our selfish insight into European and global issues.⁸

In fact, the discussion of foreign affairs was limited and one Prague-based dissident organiser interviewed for this study had not read Dienstbier's essays.⁹

The somewhat peripheral importance of world politics in Czechoslovak dissident circles was partly due to the nature of the dissident movement and the way it had had to operate: its foremost concerns were domestic and there was much difficulty in disseminating *samizdat*. But the relatively limited discussion of foreign affairs also represented the cleavages within the dissident community, with some members being less urbanised and less concerned with more global and

⁷ Šabata, 'New Form of Detente', p. 94.

⁸ Milan Šimečka, 'From Class Obsessions to Dialogue', in Kaldor *et al* (eds), p. 351.

⁹ Interview with Vondra, September 1994; and interview with Fialková-Němcová, September 1995.

abstract issues. In addition, what thinking there was on global politics, as will be seen presently, appeared to be so outlandish that Western publishers were hesitant to adopt the works. Dienstbier, for example, was to have had his main work, appropriately entitled *Snění o Evropě* (Dreaming about Europe), published in both German and English, but the respective publishers decided the work was too unrealistic to market.¹⁰

As discussed in chapter 2, Havel was adamant that the civic values the Czechoslovak dissidents advanced before 1989 were even more applicable once in power, a belief he extended specifically to foreign policy. Chapter 4 showed how Czechoslovak dissidents believed that the Prague Appeal of 1985 on the unification of Germany was realised in 1990. Dienstbier said it was a shame that his book was not published in Western languages because it could have provided grist for debate on the restructuring of post-Cold War Europe.¹¹

That the dissidents used 'utopian' ideas as the basis for their foreign policy does not mean that they were completely naive, that they misunderstood the nature of the Cold War and the superpower arms race. In 'An Anatomy of Reticence', for example, Havel was critical of the Western peace movements, suggesting that proponents of disarmament, especially unilateral disarmament, had a flawed understanding of the international dilemma.¹²

Once in office, the Czechoslovak leadership began advocating the removal of the tangible effects of the Cold War. Because Czechoslovak policy was taken to imply, especially by the US, the rapid disappearance of the military blocs and, with the disappearance of NATO also the

¹⁰ Interview with author, 13 September 1995.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Havel, 'Anatomie jedné zdrženlivosti'.

military commitment of the US to Europe, Havel was forced quickly to retreat and qualify his position.

In Washington in February 1990, in particular, he suggested that he was simply cultivating such an impression to create media attention. Addressing a joint session of the US Congress, Havel declared: 'It is not true that the Czech write Vaclav Havel wants to dissolve the Warsaw Pact tomorrow and the NATO the next day.' Even in trying to diffuse American scepticism and hostility, Havel's qualified position nevertheless still suggested that the military blocs would dissolve at some point.¹³

Two months later, however, Dienstbier reiterated to an audience in London the need to change the nature and role of the alliances:

The allegation that the two military and political blocs will be a safeguard of peace and security in Europe for a long time yet is based on inaccurate premises. It is the old, ideological concept of conflict and the ideological concept of security and, at the same time, the old concept of a balance of forces...can two widely different ideological blocs, which moreover today find themselves in totally unequal positions, represent a balance of forces and, at the same, be a safeguard of security?¹⁴

This thinking became Czechoslovak policy, when on 6 April 1990, the Foreign Ministry circulated to Embassies in Prague the Czechoslovak Memorandum on the European Security Commission. The Memorandum proposed a three-stage transformation of European security. In the first stage both military alliances should be transformed into strictly political organisations. The second stage involved collapsing them into a pan-European structure. The third stage would result, presumably organically as a corollary of the second, in a confederation of Europe. Thus, geopolitics in Europe would be reduced simply to geographic references.

¹³ These policy changes are discussed in the section below on Havel's views on the role of the US in Europe.

¹⁴ Dienstbier, 'From the Europe', pp. 6-7.

Before proceeding with the Czechoslovak plan for a new Europe, and particularly the role of CSCE in it, it is necessary to determine the place accorded to the superpowers in this programme.

The Superpowers in Czechoslovak's 'New Europe'

The proposal to eliminate the military alliances from Europe might seem to suggest - and was taken as such by the US - that the Czechoslovak vision of the new Europe did not include the two superpowers. In fact, they accorded a place to each in their vision of the new Europe. Evidence of Havel's desire to retain the US and the Soviet Union in Europe came from his offer to host a summit of the two superpowers in Prague.¹⁵ This section provides an overview of the place the Czechoslovak leadership attributed to each of the superpowers in Europe.

The Soviet Union

It was shown in chapter 5 how Havel tried to have a positive attitude to the Soviet Union. Several of Czechoslovakia's policies aimed to keep the Soviet Union tied to Europe. In his address to the US Congress, for example, Havel explained that the US could help Czechoslovakia most by helping the Soviet Union on its 'on its irreversible but immensely complicated path to democracy', and added 'The millions you give to the East today will return in the form of billions in savings'.¹⁶ Havel's proposal was made more concrete by Dienstbier. In what became known, to his chagrin, as the 'Harvard Plan', he suggested the creation of an economic triangle whereby Western money went to the USSR to allow it to

¹⁵ 'Former Playwright and Czech President Havel Enjoys High Politics', *Associated Press*, 28 February 1990.

¹⁶ Martin Walker, 'Havel's Congress Play a Box Office Hit', *The Guardian*, 22 February 1990.

purchase Central European goods, which in turn would permit their economies to retool without full and unsympathetic exposure to the international market.¹⁷

When Havel led a diplomatic mission to France, he drew for French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas an impressionistic sketch of Europe. A portion of the right-end of the map featured the Soviet Union.¹⁸ While the Soviet Union was neither included in its entirety nor was it given a central place, it was significantly still included.

Even in cultural terms, Havel and Dienstbier would certainly reject Kundera's assertion that Russian culture did not belong in Europe.¹⁹ While neither Czech leader believes in a 'national' culture over a universal culture, they both expressed their personal liking for Russian culture, and Dienstbier only objected to the 'un-cultural' features of Soviet art.²⁰

The United States

George Bush might have been appealing to the Czechoslovak sense of the new political order when the American president referred to Europe as becoming 'whole and free'.²¹ A 'free' Europe did not necessarily mean the exclusion of the US from the continent; rather, Czechoslovaks perhaps even tended to exaggerate the intensity and significance of their ties to

¹⁷ Interview with the author, 13 September 1995. For the logic of the costs of the proposal, see, for example, *International Herald Tribune*, 23 May 1990.

¹⁸ Interview with Jaroslav Šedivý, 12 September 1995, who was party to these talks as Czechoslovak Ambassador to Paris.

¹⁹ See Kundera, 'Tragedy of Central Europe'; and the reply by Josef Brodsky, 'Why Kundera is Wrong about Dostoevsky', *Cross Currents* Vol. 5 (1986), pp. 477-83.

²⁰ See, for example, *Jana Klusáková a Jiří Dienstbier*; and interview with Dienstbier.

²¹ Cited in Robert Mauther, 'A Security Limbo: The Threat of Instability in Eastern Europe has Persuaded the West that the CSCE is Worth Backing', *The Financial Times*, 19 June 1991.

the US. The fact that the plans for an independent Czechoslovak state were laid in the US and signed during Masaryk's wartime visit to Pittsburgh was seen by some as the preeminent 'shaping influence' on the nascent Czechoslovak identity.²² Personal connections to the US of Czechoslovak leaders also suggest a possible national bond. Masaryk's mother was American and, unusually, he adopted her maiden name as his middle name. Alexander Dubcek's parents migrated to the US, although they later returned to Slovakia.

After the Velvet Revolution, both Czechoslovak and American officials attempted to accentuate these historical connections. Thus, US Secretary of State James Baker referred to Woodrow Wilson and Masaryk as friends and mentioned the commonality of being former professors. He also cited a note Masaryk sent to Wilson when Czechoslovakia became independent, reflecting the words of the US Declaration of Independence.²³ For his part, Havel received one of his several standing ovations in the US Congress by saying that the Velvet Revolution was 'inspired by the U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence'.²⁴

While Czechoslovakia may not have been particularly important to the US, Havel sought to make the most use of his visit to Washington in February 1990. When he visited the White House as the first Czechoslovak head of state on an official visit, differences in vision became apparent, but he seemed to avoid confrontation. Bush informed him that a united Germany as a member of NATO would foster stability, a proposal Havel had originally opposed. Nevertheless, at this moment at least, he expressed no opposition. Moreover, while Havel still referred to the inevitable dissolution of the two Alliances, he agreed that US forces were required

²² Smelser, 'Castles', p. 88. He adds the experience of the Legion in Siberia.

²³ Baker, Speech, pp. 2-3.

²⁴ *International Herald Tribune*, 22 February 1990.

in Europe until the continent could provide for its own security.²⁵ By his second meeting with Bush during the Washington visit, Havel seemed to have assented to Bush's position and the White House claimed that Havel agreed that American forces contributed to stability and security in Europe.

Havel's whole visit to Washington, as Martin Walker keenly described it, was tantamount to a preconceived literary plot. His programme of dissolving the military alliances and withdrawing American forces from Europe set him against Bush and astutely generated media attention. His speech on Capitol Hill, as Walker described it, provided 'the carefully crafted denouement, a final peroration by the playwright himself, with the stage filled with characters, Congress as chorus, resolving all the contradictions of the plot'.²⁶

But Havel hinted at the need for a European-made security structure, since 'for another 100 years American soldiers should not have to be separated from their mothers'. His sense of responsibility and apology came through when he stated that Europe had an obligation to become 'guarantor of world peace' as a compensation 'for having given the world two world wars'. His idealism was present also: not only had Europe to make amends, but it would also need to determine its own security requirements 'so that its own security might radiate peace into the whole world'.

Havel's February 1990 speeches in Washington demonstrated that he had to change both the presentation and the content of his programme for the reconstruction of Europe. Undeterred, however, his government issued its Memorandum on the European Security Commission in April

²⁵ Lionel Barber, 'Havel Win US Pledge of Trade Ties', *The Financial Times*, 21 February 1990.

²⁶ See Martin Walker, 'Havel's Congress Play a Box Office Hit', *The Guardian*, 22 February 1990.

1990. While he may have endured the initial resistance the US posed to his plans, the additional opposition from the US and from other major countries, as well as unforeseen developments in European politics, eventually forced post-Communist Czechoslovakia to dispense with its ideals and to adopt more traditional policies.

Role of the CSCE

Czechoslovakia's post-Communist government was enthusiastic about the post-Cold War utility of the CSCE process. Indeed, the central plank in Prague's programme for reconstructing European security was an enhanced CSCE. Part of the role the new Czechoslovak leaders accorded the CSCE may have derived from their experience under communism. While the CSCE did not furnish direct support to Czechoslovak dissidents in the late-1970s and 1980s, it provided inspiration and example.²⁷ Some Czechoslovak dissidents had been derisive of the role and importance of the Helsinki Accords. Milan Šimečka wrote of the Third Basket which forced the European Communist regimes to acknowledge human rights as:

the price the Soviet Union had to pay for recognition of the status quo in Europe. The Soviet Union was only too happy to pay it, since our political culture contained thousands of artfully contrived methods for skirting human-rights obligations. Indeed, in Czechoslovakia the immediate post-Helsinki period was a time of the worst persecutions. A deaf ear was turned to any references to the Helsinki Final Act and, as I know from personal experience, any talk

²⁷ For the origins and nature of the CSCE, in particular its emphasis on human rights, see John Freeman, *Security and the CSCE Process* (London: Macmillan, 1991); John J. Maresca, *To Helsinki: The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1973-1975* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985); Vojtech Mastny (ed.), *Helsinki, Human Rights, and European Security: Analysis and Documentation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986); and Kari Möttölä (ed.), *Ten Years after Helsinki: The Making of the European Security Regime* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986). For recent developments in the CSCE, see Alexis Heraclides, *Security and Cooperation in Europe: The Human Dimension, 1972-1992* (London: Frank Cass, 1993); and *Helsinki-II and its Aftermath: The Making of the CSCE into an International Organization* (London & New York: Pinter Publishers, 1993).

of Helsinki in those days would send police officers into fits of laughter.²⁸

Despite Šimečka's pessimistic account, Charter 77 sought to force the Czechoslovak government to recognise the principles of human rights to which it had agreed by signing the Helsinki Accords. Charter 77 also attributed its emergence, as well as that of other independent civic movements throughout the Soviet bloc, to the Helsinki Process.²⁹ This is not to suggest that Czechoslovak dissidents saw the CSCE as a panacea for the establishment and maintenance of human rights. Some members were disappointed with aspects of the CSCE, such as the 'double expectation' of the Helsinki-Belgrade meetings, which Czech philosopher Jan Patočka qualified the 'double disappointment'. Similarly, Ladislav Hejdínek called the CSCE a modern Treaty of Westphalia, which allowed each state to run its domestic affairs as it choose, free of interference from without.³⁰

Irrespective of nostalgia for, or emotional attachment to, the CSCE, once in power Czechoslovakia's dissident-leadership became very active in and a proponent of the CSCE. Havel advocated holding a second Helsinki Conference earlier than the scheduled date of 1992, for example, and using it confirm borders in Europe. He also suggested holding what he called a Helsinki II Conference as a European peace conference to 'put a formal end to the Second World War and all its unhappy consequences.'³¹

²⁸ Šimečka, 'From Class Obsessions', p. 363.

²⁹ See, for example, Dienstbier, *Snění o Evropě*, p. 126; and the Charter 77 Declaration of 12 March 1978, reprinted in Skilling, *Charter 77*, pp. 275-77, esp. at p. 275.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 159-60.

³¹ Cited in Martin Fletcher, 'Havel Urges Peace Conference to End Post-War Divisions', *The Times*, 22 February 1990.

Such a conference was held in Paris on 19-21 November 1990, attended by 34 heads of states.³² Havel demonstrated his commitment to a 'democratic' Europe by advocating the representation of the three Baltic republics, then still part of the Soviet Union. This caused problems with the Soviet Union. Gorbachev cancelled a prearranged meeting with Havel at the Conference, although the official explanation was for 'technical reasons'. The three republics were allowed to observe the Conference as the guests of France.

Havel could justly draw inspiration for his European programme from actual developments, including Helsinki II. The Paris Conference occurred, despite domestic challenges to many of the key figures. On 20 November the government of French Prime Minister Michel Rocard narrowly escaped defeat in the National Assembly, a fate which befell Thatcher as leader of the British Conservative Party the next day.

But if the Paris Conference was a success, it was not due to Havel's efforts, which demonstrates perhaps that a small country may propose ideas but cannot implement them. His idea and its practical implementation were taken over by others. The basis for the Conference has been attributed to a proposal made by Gorbachev in November 1989 to Mitterand, who in turn 'snatched at the chance of holding it in Paris'. In fact, however, German officials did much of the work and the CSCE meeting earned the nickname of 'Genscher's baby'.³³

Nevertheless, Havel seemed confident of the future success of the CSCE. On his return from Paris, he commented 'this summit actually

³² For the text of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, see *NATO Review* Vol. 38, No. 6 (December 1990), pp. 27-31.

³³ 'The Thrill of Europe's Rebirth: The Paris CSCE Conference', *Economist*, 24 November 1990.

represents quite a new step forward, a kind of second breath, a new dynamism of the Helsinki process.'³⁴

His optimism coincided with the views of some participants. Thatcher called the Charter of Paris Europe's 'Magna Carta',³⁵ and some commentators believed that the CSCE had acquired 'an institutional life of its own'.³⁶ This assessment derived from the establishment of five CSCE bodies: a Council; a Committee for Senior Officials (CSO); a Secretariat; the Conflict Prevention Centre; and the Office for Free Elections.

However, even those most sympathetic recognised the CSCE's limitations, stemming from the democratic nature of its consensus voting, its lack of structure and the absence of enforcement mechanisms. The CSCE attempted to overcome some of the legal restrictions on its effectiveness. The Czechoslovak leadership was neither alone nor misguided in supporting the CSCE's potential despite certain weaknesses.

The defining feature of the CSCE was its basis in sovereign egalitarianism and consensus voting. This probably appealed to the Czechoslovak sense of state equality. Nevertheless, sovereign equality reduced the practical effectiveness of the process, since any member could veto a resolution. Ironically, Czechoslovakia experienced the effects of the practice when Lichtenstein unilaterally blocked proposals to locate the CSCE Secretariat in Prague in retaliation for Czechoslovakia's refusal to recognise the micro-principality's claim to land in Czechoslovakia.³⁷

Problems created by consensus voting were addressed in the Prague Document, which adopted the voting practice 'consensus-minus-one', whereby resolutions could pass if all but one member agreed.

³⁴ Prague Home Service, 21 November 1990, in *SWB*, 23 November 1990.

³⁵ *The Independent*, 19 November 1990.

³⁶ 'The Thrill of Europe's Rebirth: The Paris CSCE Conference', *The Economist*, 24 November 1990.

³⁷ Reuters, 14 November 1990.

Resolutions could thus be brought against a single member transgressing CSCE norms. This was first invoked by the CSO on 12 May 1992 when a resolution was passed against Yugoslavia for 'clear, gross and uncorrect violations of CSCE commitments' in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina.³⁸

The assessment of the Paris meeting was generally that the CSCE was 'no longer seen even by its most ardent backers as a panacea for the new Europe's security problems.' At the same time, it must be noted that Western scepticism about the CSCE decreased as they began to acknowledge that Eastern Europe might become a power vacuum.³⁹

Despite this heightened interest in the CSCE as an institution to cope with the problems of the new Europe, Czechoslovakia's intellectual contributions to that end generally went unnoticed.⁴⁰ Rather than being a starting point for discussion, as intended, Czechoslovakia's proposal to use the CSCE as a security system to replace the military alliances was observed with concern by major powers fearing adverse effects on their European interests. Nevertheless, perhaps it was recognition of Czechoslovakia's contributions to the post-Communist debate on Europe that motivated the placement of the new CSCE Secretariat in Prague.

The success of the Czechoslovak programme to reform the CSCE will be discussed in the final section of the chapter, which considers the interrelationship between European institutions. It is necessary first to comment on Czechoslovak policy towards the evolution of the CSCE and how Prague's expectations for the Helsinki process were met.

First, it must be said that the Czechoslovak government pursued a gradual programme, perhaps in keeping with dissident thinking.⁴¹ Thus,

³⁸ Cited in Heraclides, *Helsinki-II*, p. 84.

³⁹ Mauther, 'Security Limbo'.

⁴⁰ See, for example, the one reference, with the Dienstbier's first name incorrect, in Heraclides, *Helsinki-II*, p. 14.

⁴¹ See chapter 2.

Prague did not expect an immediate transformation of the European order. For all the problems in achieving the European institutional order that Havel and Dienstbier originally stipulated, they continued to speak of the gradual and eventual convergence of existing institutions.⁴²

It soon became clear that CSCE members were unwilling to equip the process to be able to replace the two military alliances, nor to provide a comprehensive security system for Europe. Nevertheless, several measures were initiated to make the CSCE more effective and credible as an international organisation. As we have seen, several permanent bodies were established, regular meetings arranged, and measures undertaken to overcome some of the idealistic and paralytic practices such as consensus voting. While the CSCE proved ineffective in the Yugoslav conflict, other organisations were equally ineffective and therefore the CSCE cannot be considered a failure on those grounds alone.

It was the threats and problems emanating from Central and Eastern Europe that gave rise to the understanding that the CSCE could not solve many, and certainly not all, of these challenges. It was, however, precisely the example of these problems that the Czechoslovak government used to bolster interest in and support for the CSCE.

'BACK TO EUROPE': WESTERN INSTITUTIONS AS POLITICAL IDENTITY

The essence of post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy was the 'return to Europe'. It is in this context that Prague's relations with, and expectations of, Western institutions, particularly the Council of Europe and the EC, must be seen.

⁴² See, for example, the conclusion of this chapter for Dienstbier's comments following the 31 January 1992 CSCE Foreign Ministers Council Session in Prague.

The Council of Europe: Values Confirmed?

The Council of Europe embodied Western democratic ideals. Founded in 1949, it was the first political-democratic organisation of post-war Western Europe. It had been vocal in criticising human rights violations in Communist Czechoslovakia, frequently declaring that such behaviour contravened international laws and endangered meetings of the CSCE. In a resolution of 28 September 1978, the Council expressed 'full solidarity with the ideas of Charter 77 and associated itself with the many protests at the continued victimisation of all those associated with the Prague Spring and with the Charter'.⁴³

So insistent is the Council on a member's democratic credentials that the anti-Communist revolutions of 1989 did not in themselves entitle the Central Europeans to entrance. Only after free elections would membership be extended. Czechoslovakia thus gained membership in February 1991, behind Hungary's entry in November 1990, whereas Poland was only able to join the Council in November 1991. In addition, the Council made a much stricter assessment of Slovakia's political development and behaviour before admitting the independent state in 1993.

Nevertheless, the Council of Europe's political influence is limited and its economic leverage non-existent. Thus, the Czechoslovaks secured cultural-political recognition from membership but other benefits were not forthcoming. However, symbolic recognition should not be underestimated. The Central European states saw membership as an affirmation of having 'rejoined the European mainstream' and as a means to increase their

⁴³ Quotation from Skilling, *Charter 77*, p. 158.

contacts with the EC.⁴⁴ The Council's Secretary-General, Catherine Lalumière, welcomed Havel's call that the organisation serve as Europe's 'political, legislative, and ideological centre'.⁴⁵

Havel also exercised his access to the Council as a platform to press his reconceptualisation of European security. For example, speaking to the body's Parliamentary Assembly on 10 May 1990, he called for the transformation of the two military alliances and for a new European security system, to be based on a revamped Helsinki process.⁴⁶

While political democratisation was sufficient for membership in the Council of Europe, it was an insufficient prerequisite for joining the European Community. Post-Communist Czechoslovakia's perceptions of the New Europe were challenged in its dealings with the EC.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

The views held in Czechoslovakia of the EC before the Velvet Revolution fall into two categories: the official and the dissident.

The official policy on the EC was hesitant if not hostile. The Soviet bloc only recognized the existence of the EC in 1988.⁴⁷ Even though Hungary, with extensive trading ties with the West, had signed an agreement with the EC in 1988, Czechoslovakia merely signed a trade agreement in January 1989 which lifted quotas from half of the country's industrial goods. This move was viewed as the 'basis for further

⁴⁴ Richard Weitz, 'The Expanding Role of the Council of Europe', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 34 (24 August 1990), p. 49.

⁴⁵ Catherine Lalumière, 'The Council of Europe's Place in the New European Architecture', *NATO Review* (December 1994/January 1995), p. 12.

⁴⁶ See, for example, *The Independent*, 11 May 1990.

⁴⁷ See van Ham, *EC, Eastern Europe*, p. 121.

expansion' of Czechoslovak trade with the EC.⁴⁸ Such optimism was still tempered by accusations against the EC in the Czechoslovak Communist press of 'interference' in CMEA countries by linking assistance to 'positive change'.⁴⁹

Independent thinkers in Czechoslovakia, however, had different perceptions of the EC. To them, it embodied the European ideal. While the revolutions of 1989 came from the people, some inspiration for those events came also from 'Western policies and by the lure of Western institutions'.⁵⁰ Not only could part of the credit for the 1989 revolutions be attributed to the EC, but its response to the post-Communist states was a test of how well the EC put its own principles into practice. As one commentator noted, 'Coordinating western assistance to the East was a prestigious assignment which corresponded with Brussels' ambitions to assume greater responsibility in the field of foreign policy'.⁵¹

In its responses to systemic change in Central and Eastern Europe, the EC engaged in two tests: one of its own ideals, and the other of the way in which Central Europeans conceptualised Western Europe. The EC had no founding principle to suggest that democracy was in itself sufficient grounds for membership. At the same time, however, its treatment of other potential members suggested that democratisation was a key issue in eligibility for membership. Outside observers and Central European leaders alike made the case that Greece, Portugal and Spain were assured entry in order to encourage and stabilise their

⁴⁸ Wolchik, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 269.

⁴⁹ For criticisms of the EC, see *Rudé právo*, 1 December 1988 and 29 June 1989, cited in Wolchik, 'Czechoslovakia', p. 269.

⁵⁰ Dawisha, *Eastern Europe*, p. 152.

⁵¹ Van Ham, *The EC*, p. 168.

democracies.⁵² In addition, while there might not be a specific EC tenet to admit all democracies, according to Wallace, no specific cultural or geographic restrictions on membership are to be found either.⁵³

Reaffirming Czechoslovakia's place in Europe became a fundamental tenet of post-Communist foreign policy, and the foremost means of doing so was perceived to be through membership in the Community. Havel saw his country, and its neighbours, as already forming what he called 'a European community', for which the criterion was democracy.⁵⁴

East Germany's entry into the EC by the 'backdoor' of unification with West Germany provoked some into criticising the Community's hypocrisy. As Timothy Garton Ash argued, the grounds for East Germany's admission were conceivably no different from those of Czechoslovakia. Both were former Communist states, each with Soviet troops on their territory. If the Federal Republic could fund East Germany's economic transformation, then the whole of Western Europe could do the same for the East.⁵⁵ Even if Garton Ash's last argument was implausible, the expected effects of the rapid integration of the East European economies into world market - namely, a substantial decline in industrial production and high unemployment - were allowed to occur in

⁵² William Wallace, 'From the Twelve to Twenty Four? Challenges to the EC Posed by the Revolutions in Eastern Europe', in Colin Crouch and David Marquand, *Towards Greater Europe?* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), pp. 39-40; and van Ham, *The EC*, p. 196. See the latter for cases when Central Europeans used these examples.

⁵³ Wallace, 'From the Twelve', p. 40; and William Wallace, *The Transformation of Western Europe* (London: Pinter, 1990), ch. 2.

⁵⁴ Speaking in the context of Czechoslovak relations with NATO, Havel said, 'We are building democracy. The NATO members or the whole of Europe, non-aligned countries and democratic countries - all of us together form a European community'. Stated on Hungarian television, 15 February 1991, in *SWB*, 18 February 1991.

⁵⁵ Timothy Garton Ash, 'Poor But Clubbable', *The Independent*, 19 January 1990.

the case of East Germany's absorption into West Germany.⁵⁶ By this logic, Western Europe could have extended large-scale aid to Central Europe.⁵⁷

Garton Ash's arguments demonstrated how the EC did not fulfill Central European expectations of it. These were summarised by Polish Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka: 'It is not that we are "obsessed with having no roof after the collapse of COMECON and the Warsaw Pact" - as one EC politician suggested sometime ago. It is not that we desperately look for some multilateral structure to take care of us....The family of democratic West European countries, supported by the trans-Atlantic partnership, is what we aim at. Not because we need some umbrellas, but because we all share the same values and objectives....' The original mission of the EC was not being fulfilled, she continued: 'The bold vision of Monet and Schuman has not been enriched by equally bold offer [sic] to the new democracies in Eastern Europe'.⁵⁸

The Central Europeans did not accept the ideals of Western Europe unconditionally. Slovak dissident and human rights lawyer Miroslav Kusý supported the 'Return to Europe' but qualified it not 'as a substitute for fully understanding ourselves and discovering our own identity'. Nevertheless, without returning to Europe, Kusý maintained, not even such self-understanding would be possible. He cautioned: 'We've seen what was possible in cultural and political isolation: what little there was has long since been exhausted.'⁵⁹ Communist émigré Zdeněk Mlynář

⁵⁶ This is a reversal of the argument made by August Pradetto, *Studies in Comparative Communism* Vol. 25, No. 1 (March 1992), pp. 23-30.

⁵⁷ The flaw in such an argument might have been Havel's rejection of economic 'handouts'.

⁵⁸ Hanna Suchocka to Chatham House, 3 March 1993.

⁵⁹ Miroslav Kusý, *Literární týdeník*, 4 May 1990, in Whipple, 'Nationalism, Totalitarianism and Democracy', p. 251.

warned against any policy resulting in overly close integration in any bloc, undertaken rapidly out of ideological or consumer reasons.⁶⁰

While there was domestic caution on the speed and intensity of potential membership in Western institutions, a troika of leading Western commentators best summarised the case for Central European cultural affinity with Western Europe. In the unambiguously entitled article 'Let the East Europeans In!', Garton Ash, Michael Mertes, and Dominique Moïsi wrote 'Historically and culturally, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia belong to Europe. A Europe which contains Crete but not Bohemia, Lisbon but not Warsaw, is historical nonsense.' Admission of the Central Europeans, the authors argued, 'is a challenge the EC cannot refuse, if it is to live up to the ideals of its founders...'.⁶¹

The EC could and did refuse the challenge, arguing that economic performance of a prerequisite to even considering political ties. The negotiations of an economic agreement between the EC and Central Europe are therefore illustrative of the misplaced and unfulfilled aspirations that Central Europe had of the EC.

Negotiating with the EC

EC Foreign Ministers held a Council Meeting on 5 February 1990 to discuss relations with former socialist Eastern Europe. The result was a general response by the Council to developments in Central and Eastern Europe by which the Community 'then set about a simple programme of basic agreements, being mostly extensions of existing frameworks'.⁶²

⁶⁰ *Rudé právo*, 14 May 1991.

⁶¹ Timothy Garton Ash, Michael Mertes, and Dominique Moïsi, 'Let the East Europeans In!', *The New York Review of Books* 24 October 1991, p. 19.

⁶² Ian Manners, 'The Double Game': Negotiating the Association Agreements Between the European Community and the Visegrad', in Patrick Dunleavy and Jeffrey Stanyer (eds), *Contemporary Political Studies 1994. Vol. 1* (Political

Czechoslovakia had signed a limited trade agreement with the EC on 19 December 1989. The fact that Czechoslovakia, which was far behind Hungary in liberalising its economy and the extent of its foreign trade, was quickly put on the same negotiating level as Hungary demonstrates the EC's positive attitude towards the country.

The negotiations themselves were conducted fairly equitably. The European Commission, however, was not given a wide enough mandate to negotiate freely so that when differences between the EC and the Central European states arose, the Commission had to return to the Council, as happened on 15 April 1991. For the Central European states, the key difference was political; for the EC, it was economic. This illustrates the divergent conceptions each side had of the symbolic role and practical aims of the Community.

The Visegrád Group wanted explicit reference in the Agreements to their eventual membership of the EC. The EC, by contrast, was concerned with the nature of tariff concessions made to the Central Europeans. While it offered an asymmetrical lifting of tariffs, it sought to retain restrictions on three commodities: agricultural goods, textiles and steel. These were the three economic sectors for which the Visegrád Group most wanted restrictions lifted because it expected to be able to sell them to the Community. Finance Minister Klaus expressed his frustration when he calculated that Czechoslovak textile exports to Western Europe accounted for one hundredth of a percent of its consumption. Thus a 10-fold increase would be significant for Czechoslovakia but unnoticed for Western Europe, a situation which he said made him 'angry'.⁶³

On 16 December 1991, Agreements of Association were signed between the EC and Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland separately. The

Studies Association, 1994), p. 107

⁶³ *Respekt*, 22-28 July 1991.

Agreements were a major achievement and had substantial political importance since they specifically recognised that 'the ultimate aim of [the three countries] is accession to the EC'. The more immediate task, however, was to provide for the development of trade and economic cooperation between Central Europe and the Community.⁶⁴

Cooperation between the Visegrád Group and the EC was made more real by the stipulations in the Agreements for a ten-year transition period, split into two five-year periods, in which the three countries would undertake to prepare themselves for membership.

Czechoslovak Views of 'Real' Europe in Action

While the EC seemed to be equitable in its dealings with the Central European states, the EC was occasionally seen in the region as setting conditions on Central Europe's behaviour and eroding indigenous values. This is not to suggest that other prospective members, and for that matter, current members, need not alter internal policies in order to conform or converge with Community practices. Generally, the view of Central Europe's treatment by the EC is viewed thus: 'Taking into account the domestic political restrictions under which EC politicians had to negotiate the agreements, and having regard to the trade situation of other third countries, the central and east European states greatly improved their position in the hierarchy of EC trade regimes with non-Member states'.⁶⁵ In addition, the EC's demands that the Central European states improve their economies was in keeping with its practice.

⁶⁴ Cited in Jan B. de Weydenthal, 'Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland Gain Associate Membership in the EC', *RFE/RL Research Report* Vol. 1, No. 6 (7 February 1992), p. 24.

⁶⁵ Heinz Kramer, 'The European Community's Response to the 'New Eastern Europe'', *Journal of Common Market Studies* Vol. 31, No. 2 (June 1993), p. 237. Thus, for example, the Visegrád Group probably advanced over Turkey in the membership queue.

The Central European economies were clearly below EC standards. Against an EC per capita GDP average of 100 percent, Czechoslovakia measured 52, Hungary 44, and Poland only 37. These figures compared unfavourably even to the weakest national economies in the EC: Spain averaged 75 and Greece and Portugal 54.⁶⁶ Economic observers also suggested that as much as a decade would be necessary for the Central European economies to become internationally competitive.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, Czechoslovakia had to conform to EC stipulations without receiving the moral and cultural confirmation the country expected from membership, as several statements suggest.

An obvious division existed between the EC and the Central Europeans about the meaning of Community membership. The Central European slogan of 'Entering Europe' was

equated with membership of the European Community, with the arrival of large sums of investment capital and the opening of western markets to their products, with political integration and incorporation into the western security system. It all resembled a vague idea that entering Europe was rather like going into a bar, where the landlord would greet one with open arms and press a drink into one's hand.⁶⁸

Czechoslovak's expectation of its treatment by the EC was probably less indulgent, but nevertheless disappointed. Former Czech dissident Petr Přihoda wrote:

The real Europe is cautiously sympathetic but not very understanding. It imposes its conditions: Think, act, and manage business as we do; how is it possible that you are failing? The dictum of the superficially conceived Europeanism overly emphasizes imitation. We hasten to establish institutions of parliamentary

⁶⁶ Martin Rady, 'East-Central Europe and the EC', *Journal of Common Market Studies* Vol. 31. No. 1 (March 1993), p. 119, citing OECD figures for 1988.

⁶⁷ See, for example, John Pinder, *The European Community and Eastern Europe* (London: RIIA, 1991), p. 60.

⁶⁸ George Schöpflin, 'The Rise of Anti-Democratic Movements in Post-Communist Societies', in Hugh Miall (ed.), *Redefining Europe: New Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation* (London: RIIA, 1994), p. 45.

democracy, and advertising agencies are adopting Western styles, although it is not at all certain that we can afford them.'⁶⁹

While the Central European states all faced the same conditions for membership from the EC, Czechoslovakia was particularly dissatisfied with the delay of admission. At times, Havel simply spoke as if membership was taken for granted. For example, he addressed MEPs on 20 March 1990 almost as if Czechoslovakia had an automatic right to join the EC: 'We want to become a full member of the European Community no later than the end of the decade but we might have to join much sooner than that.' He stressed that 'the political need to be integrated into the European Community far outweighed the difficulties posed by the parlous state of the Czechoslovak economy.'⁷⁰ So positive were his views of Czechoslovakia's relations with the EC that he 'indicated he was already thinking beyond the association agreement' before the country had even begun to negotiate with the Community.⁷¹ Although the membership issue was unclear during the Association Agreements negotiations, at NATO Headquarters in March 1991, Havel anticipated that the Agreements would allow Czechoslovakia some participation in discussion on political union.⁷² By contrast, the EC insisted that associate membership would not necessarily become full membership.⁷³

In fact economic criteria dictated the speed of entry and Havel's political criteria were effectively ignored. Even in the economic realm,

⁶⁹ Petr Prihoda, 'On the Cutting Edge', *Forum*, 26 February 1991, in *JPRS-EEU*, 3 April 1991, p. 5.

⁷⁰ John Palmer, 'Havel Urges East-West Integration', *The Guardian*, 21 March 1991.

⁷¹ David Buchan, 'Havel Warns of Potential "Choas"', *Financial Times*, 21 March 1991.

⁷² Boris Johnson, 'Havel Feels Let Down by West over Nato Bar', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 March 1991.

⁷³ See, for example, Sarah Lambert, 'Havel and Walesa Woo the West', *The Independent*, 21 March 1991.

however, the EC did not appear to treat Central Europe by the standards it set for its own members, or by those that were stipulated in the Association Agreements. For example, Poland's chief negotiator with the EC, Andrzej Olechowski, found it unacceptable that the EC insisted on free access to the Polish market whereas Polish produce, steel, and textiles faced EC tariff and non-tariff barriers.⁷⁴ Havel's assessment of the EC's response to Central Europe was the creation of 'second class countries', a situation which he considered both 'deeply wrong' as well as 'dangerous' for the stability of Europe.⁷⁵

Czechoslovakia's dissident-leadership had seen the EC as the embodiment of cultural, historical and political values to which they believed that they had a right to rejoin. The EC, by contrast, did not conceive of itself as having any mission or obligation towards these post-socialist societies, let alone one defined by Central Europeans.

Although Central and Eastern European governments probably resented the EC's response to their political and economic liberalisation, in many respects, they received more favourable and prompt treatment than a country such as Turkey, which had long-standing negotiations with the EC. Unfortunately, the Czechoslovak leadership ascribed values and significance to the EC that the EC itself either did not hold or could not demonstrate. Czechoslovak leaders believed that the EC was the concrete manifestation of political practices to which the Central Europeans, and perhaps the Czechoslovaks foremost, both subscribed and contributed. The Central Europeans felt that they had a right to be reunited with

⁷⁴ Buchan, 'Havel Warns'.

⁷⁵ Andrej Hejma, 'Czechoslovak President Havel Says North America Still Vital to European Security', *Associated Press*, 12 June 1991.

their political heritage and not to be queued and subjected to what they saw as arbitrary conditions.

Doubtless, the Central Europeans recognised the need for economic convergence before full membership. Nevertheless, the EC response did not seem to recognise the region's historical orientations and post-communist achievements. Membership in the Council of Europe provided some confirmation but was not seen as the equivalent to Community membership. Czechoslovaks felt that the country had a right to membership and that it would be able to participate in the debates on the EC. This may have been a tactic by Havel to convince the EC to think similarly but it also reflected Czechoslovak expectations.

Asymmetry offered the Central Europeans (or any economically weaker partner or potential member of the Community) what were in effect concessions from the stronger partner to the weaker. The weaker partner was thereby theoretically offered the conditions on which it could develop in accordance with EC expectations. This included the ability to protect certain domestic industries and to trade advantageously in the EC. The Czechoslovaks should have been satisfied with that. Havel, after all, had stated he did not want economic hand outs or to be treated as a poorer brother.⁷⁶ The Agreements conceivably allowed the Czechoslovaks to work for their rewards.

However, the practical application of the Agreements provided a different scenario. It is not the remit of this thesis to discuss the EC generally or its internal functions, including foreign political or economic policy-making. It is clear, however, that the domestic politics of member countries had a profound effect on EC policy towards Central Europe. Just as the scope of trade concessions under the Association Agreements

⁷⁶ He expected from the US 'some significant economic help', but 'on the basis of equality, and not on the basis of somebody big and rich giving presents to somebody small and poor'. *International Herald Tribune*, 13-14 January 1990.

were determined by national lobbies in the EC, so the question of Central European membership was affected by the general debate within the EC on the order of priority between widening and deepening the Community's membership.

The Czechoslovaks may have felt dismayed or disappointed with the EC, but the delay in membership was not targeted against them in particular. The EC signed identical Agreements with Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia on the same day. Moreover, they received more focused attention than that obtained by other post-Communist states.

Michel Tatu wrote in May 1989, 'There are not so many things the West can do to help [Eastern Europe], except to remain what it has been for so many years: an example of success'.⁷⁷ Central Europeans did what they believed necessary to emulate the example of success which they saw to be the Community. But in denying the Central Europeans the chance to partake fully and immediately, impracticalities notwithstanding, the EC deflated the salience of the example it provided.

NATO

Havel's position on NATO shifted substantially during his Federal Presidency. He initially viewed it as a tool in the organic transformation of European security. As his programme met resistance, his position on NATO changed. Ultimately, he concluded that NATO had to continue its existence and that Czechoslovakia would be best served by firm security guarantees from it and even membership of it. This section traces the reasons for these changes in Czechoslovak policy and their implications for Havel's plan for a reconfigured European security architecture.

⁷⁷ *International Herald Tribune*, 30 May 1989, cited in van Ham, *The EC*, p. 173.

Throughout 1990, Havel saw NATO as 'almost as an anachronism'.⁷⁸ After all, the overall Czechoslovak aim was a new security structure in Europe, in which both alliances would be transformed into political entities before collapsing into a regenerated Helsinki process. Thus, the role originally consigned to NATO by the Czechoslovak leadership was as an agent of history which, its role fulfilled, would wither away.

In February 1990 US Secretary of State Baker discovered that the Czechoslovak negotiations for the withdrawal of Soviet troops were actually at crosspurposes with American policy: Havel saw the withdrawal as the first phase in the dismantling of the two military alliances. The American efforts 'to give the playwright a quick counter-lesson in military strategy'⁷⁹ may have changed Havel's presentation in Washington the following week, but not its content.

Havel denied that he planned to disband the Warsaw Pact one day and NATO the next. Moreover, he stated that Czechoslovakia owed its existence to NATO. However, he attempted to make his policy palatable to American decision-makers. According to an American official, he did not object to Bush's position that a united Germany should be in NATO, even though he had opposed the idea before.⁸⁰ He also emphasised 'that West European security, with US troops, is a guarantee of the trembling security of Europe'. Nevertheless, he added that, 'with the setting up of a new European security system, all this will change - probably'.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Nick Thorpe, 'Havel: The Loneliness of Power', *The Observer*, 16 June 1991.

⁷⁹ Lionel Barker, 'Baker's Soviet Visit Seals New Relationship', *The Financial Times*, 12 February 1990.

⁸⁰ Lionel Barber, 'Havel Wins US Pledge of Trade Ties', *The Financial Times*, 21 February 1990.

⁸¹ Cited in Edward Luca, 'Havel Returns from US as the Conquering Hero', *The Independent*, 24 February 1990.

No matter how much he repackaged his views of the US commitment to Europe and the future of NATO, Havel was considered naive for proposing European security without NATO, particularly in view of the centrality of the Alliance in the US's post-Cold War policy towards Europe.⁸²

Havel, however, was not deterred from pursuing his vision of post-Communist pan-European security. In a visit to London on 22 March 1990, he openly opposed Thatcher on the role of NATO, saying 'I think it is unfortunate to keep insisting on NATO'. While acknowledging the importance of Nato as the 'guarantor of freedom', he argued that 'the situation is quickly changing'.⁸³ Later, Havel maintained that 'some differences of opinion were not as great as originally we had thought'. Nevertheless, he then returned to his initial view, that 'the future solution will be a common security system in Europe in which the existing systems (NATO and the Warsaw Pact) would merge gradually'.⁸⁴

The extent to which NATO members were at odds with Havel's conception was illustrated by the coincidence of a meeting of the alliance's 14-member Nuclear Planning Group at a ski resort in Western Canada while Havel addressed the Council of Europe. His speech 'got much less attention than the theological debates of the nuclear planners in Canada'.⁸⁵

By summer 1990, the Czechoslovak leadership had begun to realise that its programme of converting and then collapsing the two military

⁸² *The Economist*, 24 February 1990.

⁸³ Thatcher was to known at least not to oppose Central European admission and made clear, albeit several months after Havel's visit, that the EC should 'declare unequivocally that it is ready to accept all the countries of Eastern Europe as members if they want to join'. Reuters, 5 August 1990, cited in Weitz, 'Council of Europe', p. 56.

⁸⁴ Cited in Andrew McEwen, 'Havel and Thatcher Disagree', *The Times*, 23 March 1990.

⁸⁵ *The Guardian*, 12 May 1990.

blocs into a new Helsinki process was unachievable. According to one observer, it 'apparently lost interest in the preservation of the [Warsaw] Pact after it realized that NATO was here to stay and that Prague's vision of a bloc-free, pan-European security system appeared unrealistic in the foreseeable future'.⁸⁶

Following the Baltic events of 1991, Czechoslovakia joined Hungary and Poland in advocating the disbandment of the Warsaw Pact.⁸⁷ It was gradually moving towards accepting NATO and wanting close ties with and even membership in it. Prime Minister Čalfa said on 6 February 1991 that Czechoslovakia was contemplating 'some form of co-operation' with NATO and called the organisation a 'stable force'.⁸⁸ Havel abandoned his idealist vision for European security of collapsing the two military alliances into a new Helsinki process; instead, he unambiguously sought the cessation of the Warsaw Pact and relations with NATO.

He also showed realism regarding the pace by which Czechoslovak relations with NATO would develop. In an interview with Hungarian Television following the Visegrád Summit, Havel answered a question on whether Czechoslovakia would want to join NATO by stating: 'It is not as simple as that. First it would be necessary to know whether NATO would accept us. Secondly, to join NATO is a process lasting several years. The entire military arsenal must be changed to adjust to the new one. Still, we feel - just as the Hungarians or Poles - that we must maintain good relations with NATO. Now NATO is the only efficient and proven democratic alliance in Europe'.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Libor Roucek, *After the Bloc: The New International Relations in Eastern Europe* (London: RIIA Discussion Paper 40, 1992), p. 5.

⁸⁷ See chapters 5 and 6.

⁸⁸ Cited in Leslie Colitt, 'Czechoslovakia Considering Links with NATO', *The Financial Times*, 7 February 1991.

⁸⁹ Interview on 'Panorama', Hungarian TV, 15 February 1991, in *SWB*, 18 February 1991.

On 21 March 1991, Havel became the first head of a Warsaw Pact country to visit NATO headquarters in Brussels. There he attempted to deploy his humanist values, apologising on behalf of Czechoslovaks for the lies his predecessors had told the West and commending the West for 'understanding' the dilemmas facing Central Europe. However, he combined his humanist views with geopolitical references, 'bitterly', according to some reports,⁹⁰ explaining that 'An alliance of countries united by the ideals of freedom and democracy should not be forever closed to neighboring countries that are pursuing the same goal'. He tried to evoke a sense of responsibility by declaring that 'the West bears a tremendous responsibility' to secure the transition process, especially as, in his view, Communist rule had been 'shaken off' with the encouragement of the Western democracies.

Neither his appeal to the universality of democratic principles nor to responsibility achieved Havel's aims. Instead, as a commentator wrote, his appeal merely 'won fine words and sympathy from NATO, but no concrete commitments'.⁹¹ Havel's sense of 'good taste' in politics may have dictated that he thank and commend the West for its 'understanding' of the dilemmas facing Central Europe. A more accurate sentiment was probably expressed by Hungarian President Goncz who referred to Western 'indifference'.⁹²

NATO's distant attitude towards Central European membership was reinforced the month following Havel's visit to NATO Headquarters. The acceptance by NATO of a visit to the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry at the end of April 1991 was recognized as 'extraordinary'. But at the same time

⁹⁰ Michael Binyon, 'Warsaw Pact Break-up Leaves Security Vacuum', *The Times*, 30 March 1991.

⁹¹ David Buchan, 'Havel Secures Little But Fine Words from NATO', *The Financial Times*, 22 March 1991.

⁹² Nick Thorp, 'Havel: The Loneliness of Power', *The Observer*, 16 June 1991.

there prevailed 'a strong sense that the men from NATO were here for the freebie. The East Europeans must be listened to and their hospitality, of course enjoyed. But their guests were in no mood to make promises in return.'⁹³

While the East European countries did not then apply for NATO membership directly, Havel made clear to the NATO Council in March 1991 that he sought membership for Czechoslovakia. He also proposed at the Paris CSCE meeting that Czechoslovakia join NATO, and he also suggested entry into the WEU.⁹⁴ Both suggestions were rebuffed. He also sought some sort of association agreement with NATO, which was also refused.⁹⁵ While Baker proposed during a four-day visit to Moscow in February 1990 that an 'association' of Germany with NATO might have been the best way to soothe the fears of its neighbours,⁹⁶ such an option was not extended to the Central Europeans. Regardless of the outcome of these requests, they broke Havel's pattern of seeking security by securing the Soviet Union in Europe. Ironically, however, NATO's rejection of Czechoslovak membership was justified on the grounds, as NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner declared, that for any new European security system to work, it had to be 'built in co-operation with the Soviet Union'.⁹⁷

⁹³ Sarah Helm, 'NATO Resists East European Request for Protection', *The Independent*, 27 April 1991.

⁹⁴ The WEU offered 'Associate Partnerships' to nine post-Soviet states only in May 1994. For an overview of Havel's fluctuating positions on security institutions, see Helm, 'NATO Resists'.

⁹⁵ This is within the time period covered. Arguably, programmes such as Partnership for Peace may have come from pressure such as Havel's. In addition, the Czech and Slovak Republics were among 9 post-Communist states granted associate status in the WEU, a position not extended to Russia.

⁹⁶ Barber, 'Baker's Soviet Visit'.

⁹⁷ 'Nato's decision was correct. A new European security system if it is ever to work, must be built in co-operation with the Soviet Union'. Mauther, 'Security Limbo'.

Rebuffed by NATO, Havel said that Czechoslovakia would attempt to obtain bilateral security guarantees from its neighbours, Germany and the Soviet Union.⁹⁸ Czechoslovakia pursued this policy with Germany during Genscher's April 1991 visit to Prague. The result was both German support for Czechoslovakia's European vision and also discussions on bilateral matters 'intended to help fill the gap left by the Warsaw Pact'.⁹⁹ While this was traditional diplomatic practice, it deviated from post-Communist Czechoslovakia's previous assessments of and aspirations for European security.

This chapter has concentrated thus far on Czechoslovakia's views and relations with European institutions. Nevertheless, it is necessary to offer some explanation for NATO action, or inaction, toward Central Europe. The first issue to note is that NATO was simply taken by surprise by the events that occurred in Eastern Europe and was slow to enact policy. It can also be argued that NATO followed a policy that can be called 'constructive disengagement', that is, it adopted policies to appease the Central European desires and demands for a full NATO security guarantee without offering such a guarantee.

The June Copenhagen meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers, for example, announced NATO's intention of 'developing a true security "partnership" with all of the post-Communist governments'. At the Rome Summit in November 1991, NATO heads 'agreed to expand the scope of the Alliance's liaison program with' the Baltic and East European states. In Spring 1992, a US State Department official stated that NATO wanted 'to consider creative new ways to work with other institutions to maintain

⁹⁸ David Buchan, 'Havel Warns of Potential "Chaos"', *The Financial Times*, 21 March 1991.

⁹⁹ Susan Greenberg, 'Genscher Backs Prague Initiative', *The Guardian*, 12 April 1991.

stability and integrate the Eastern states into the new European order'.¹⁰⁰ The concrete policy which followed was the establishment of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), a forum of the Foreign Ministers of NATO's 16 members with nine Central and East European counterparts. It first convened on 20 December 1991.¹⁰¹

On 1 March 1991 NATO agreed three types of cooperation with Czechoslovakia. They included visits by Czechoslovak civil and military representatives to NATO headquarters, representatives of NATO and SHAPE to Czechoslovakia and Czechoslovak officials would go to SHAPE. These visits were to be followed by higher level visits to the country.¹⁰² While important from a symbolic point of view, these exchanges did not fulfil Czechoslovak designs.

While Czechoslovakia, like many of the former Warsaw Pact countries, sought close ties with NATO, the attitude of the Western allies, especially the US, was that it was *they* who wanted to expand the security guarantee to the post-Communist states. An American official intimated that these states were satisfied with the consultative process, that 'many Eastern governments saw liaison [with NATO] as one of a growing web of relations that reinforced the notion that they were part of Western Europe'. By contrast, the official wrote, it was the Bush Administration which wanted to offer the region a more tangible security structure: 'The administration believed that it was no longer adequate for NATO simply to applaud the transformation of the East and express its political support for this process. These states will require concrete Western advice and assistance if they are to succeed in their

¹⁰⁰ Stephen J. Flanagan, 'NATO and Central and Eastern Europe: From Liaison to Security Partnership', *Washington Quarterly* (Vol. 15, No.2, Spring 1992), p. 141.

¹⁰¹ See, generally, Guido Gerosa, 'The North Atlantic Cooperation Council', *European Security* Vol. 1, No. 3 (Autumn 1992), pp. 273-94.

¹⁰² ČTK 1 March 1991, in *SWB*, 5 March 1991.

restructuring efforts and become members of the emerging Euro-Atlantic community of free nations that the United States and its NATO allies are working to develop'.¹⁰³ Despite such apparent intentions of the Atlantic Alliance, the Central European countries did not formally apply for membership because 'it was made clear to them that their applications would be turned down'.¹⁰⁴

On 2 October 1991, Baker and Genscher called for extensive consultations on military conversion in Eastern Europe and the formalisation and regularisation of the liaison process between NATO and the post-Communist states.¹⁰⁵ For all the talk of a specific formal security structure or even a guarantee, none was forthcoming.

By 1991 it seemed to the Central Europeans that the lack of firm security guarantees or full entry into NATO implicitly meant that the Alliance intended to use Central Europe as a new buffer or shatterbelt.

Havel took political risks to advance his plan to transform NATO. He was in open disagreement with Washington, London and Paris. Ironically, his position on European security, though for different reasons, came most to resemble that of the Soviet Union. The strength of Czechoslovakia's conviction and determination makes its retreat from the initial idea of eliminating NATO remarkable.

Havel was forced to come to this position for two reasons, both beyond his control. The first was the resistance of his Western partners and NATO to his ideas. The second reason was the course of events, particularly the instability in Eastern Europe that Havel came to use himself in order to justify Czechoslovak membership of the Alliance.

¹⁰³ Flanagan, 'NATO', p. 146.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Mauther, 'Pillar in the World of Instability', *The Financial Times*, 7 May 1991.

¹⁰⁵ A summary of the statement is provided in Flanagan, 'NATO', pp. 146-7.

By the second year of Havel's foreign policy, it was clear that the anti-political politics of his foreign policy had receded. The efforts to transform the two military and then collapse them into a new Helsinki II had yielded to efforts to secure formal military partnership with NATO.¹⁰⁶

This change resulted from the Czechoslovak government's recognition that, regardless of its diplomacy and confidence in the ultimate success of humanism, forces within the international system determined the country's place in the new order. The Prague leadership adjusted its policies accordingly, demanding not only security guarantees from the West but also full membership of NATO.

The Revival of Geopolitics

By 1991 Havel was using the threat of insecurity in Eastern Europe in his attempts to secure membership in West European institutions. He still tempered his words but he also began to play the Western game, both in form and content. He conformed more closely to diplomatic practices and expressed appreciation of how 'understanding' the West was towards Central Europe.¹⁰⁷ This may have been a tactic but it suggests that he was not as condemning of the dividing lines imposed in post-Communist Europe as he might have been, and as his counterparts were.

Havel also started to adopt the language of alarm. Instead of referring to a supranational, confident and cooperative Central European

¹⁰⁶ For an overview, see the appropriately titled Jan Obrman, 'From Idealism to Realism', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 2, No. 50-51 (20 December 1991), esp. p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ Thorpe, 'Havel'.

ethos, he portrayed a fragmented, volatile and incapable region. For example, speaking to West European politicians on 20 March 1991, he referred to the possibility of his region becoming a 'zone of chaos and helplessness'. He also warned of the danger of 'demagogic, nationalist, totalitarian messiahs'.¹⁰⁸ He claimed to the European Parliament that by not admitting Central Europe to the EC, the Community would contribute to the construction of a 'zone of helplessness and chaos'. Similarly, in June 1991 he told a Conference on European security he jointly sponsored with Mitterand that the Community's exclusion of new members would undermine the continent's stability.¹⁰⁹ In using this language, he began to sound like Western neo-realist analysts who adopted security justifications for the extension of Western institutions into the region.¹¹⁰

International relations scholar and Czechoslovak diplomat-émigré George Liska maintained in 1990 that 'Today's pro-Westernism has assumed the guise of enthusiasm for taking part in supranational European unity with the greatest possible detachment from the East. It is the generic equivalent of membership in the Franco-English system of collective security, a mere façade in the pretended structure of security against a vanquished, but relatively strengthened, Germany that provided the foundations of hopes in the years after 1918'.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Cited in John Palmer, 'Havel Urges East-West Integration', *The Guardian*, 21 March 1991.

¹⁰⁹ Mark Lawrence, 'Czech President Havel Says Czechoslovakia Wants EC Membership by 2000', *Associated Press*, 20 March 1991; and Hejma, 'Czechoslovak President'.

¹¹⁰ For example, 'the West should use its economic leverage to encourage Eastern European states to adopt democracy, protect human rights of national minorities, accept current borders, and eschew the propagation of hyper-nationalism'. Stephen van Evera, 'Primed for Peace: Europe after the Cold War', *International Security* Vol. 15, No. 3 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 7-57.

¹¹¹ George Liska, *Fallen Dominoes, Reviving Powers* (Washington: The Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute, 1990), p. 6.

Havel strove for the integration of Central Europe into Western structures and institutions; but his government was anxious to keep the Soviet Union and Russia in any new European system as well. While he believed that Czechoslovakia had a right to membership of West European institutions on cultural grounds, he began to assert cultural dividing lines of his own. In 1994, he said with regard to security arrangements that 'the nature and substance of the "Partnership for Peace" project will be one thing if we are talking about the Central Asian republics that are today members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and something entirely different in the case of countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia or Slovenia. By virtue of their entire history, spiritual and intellectual traditions, culture, atmosphere and geopolitical position, the latter countries belong to the classical European West, and any separation of them from that West would be suicidal for the whole of Europe'.¹¹²

Since Havel used exclusionary terminology and drew dividing lines across the Eurasian continent, it should not have come as a surprise to him that others would do the same to Central Europe.

The increased recognition of the need for NATO suggests that the Czechoslovak government had begun to reduce the importance of an inclusionary foreign policy, one that included the Soviet Union. By early 1991, as we have seen, Czechoslovakia had become adamant about the dismantling of the Warsaw Pact and the need for a full security guarantee from NATO. It seemed that the Czechoslovak position was arguably converging with that of NATO: that NATO should continue to exist in its own right but in cooperation with the CSCE.¹¹³

¹¹² Havel, 'Call for Sacrifice', p. 6.

¹¹³ Still outstanding would have been the question of full membership for Central Europe of NATO, a policy which NATO could have been expected to resist.

To this end the North Atlantic Cooperation Council Statement of Dialogue, Partnership and Cooperation of 20 December 1991 aimed to strengthen:

the role of the CSCE and to the achievement of its objectives without prejudice to its competence and mechanisms. We seek an architecture for the new Europe that is firmly based on the principles and provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris.¹¹⁴

NATO's Rome Summit acknowledged the role of the CSCE in crisis resolution and conflict prevention. The extent that Czechoslovakia's policies coincided with those of NATO was not so much the achievement of Czechoslovak diplomacy as a two-fold recognition by the Czechoslovak leadership: first, that its ideas challenged the interests of and therefore met the resistance of major powers; second, Prague realised that its own interests could not be met by its previous ideas. A pan-European security structure as envisaged by Prague might eventually emerge. But Havel's conception of Central European supranationalism evaporated, not least with the evidence of the Yugoslav conflict; and general security seemed to be providable only by NATO. In order to fulfil both its idealistic objectives and those modified by practice, the Czechoslovak government was obliged to engage in traditional bilateral diplomacy, a form which departs substantially from its concept of highly plural decision-making among states, and particularly the emphasis it gave to 'people's diplomacy'. Not only did that diplomacy diverge from its original form, it also had implications for its content.

In tactical terms, in order to further its programme for Europe, the Czechoslovak government sided with national governments sympathetic to it. This had two repercussions, one relating to the principle of Czechoslovak foreign policy and the other to its practice. In order to

¹¹⁴ North Atlantic Cooperation Council Statement of Dialogue, Partnership and Cooperation, 20 December 1991, reproduced in *NATO Review* Vol. 40, No. 1 (February 1992), p. 29.

achieve its aim of an alliance-free Europe, Czechoslovakia had to ally itself with particular countries. Czechoslovakia had explained Central European cooperation not as the creation of formal structures but as a means to return to Europe. Czechoslovakia found itself seeking bilateral partnerships. The practical consequence was that Czechoslovakia became more politically reliant upon, and vulnerable to, any country which supported Czechoslovakia's policies and was capable of fulfilling them.

The country which was overwhelmingly supportive of the integration of the Central European states into Western structures and most sympathetic to Czechoslovakia's European proposals was Germany. It was suggested in chapter 4 that post-Communist Czechoslovak policy towards Germany was to some degree conditioned by the hope and expectation that Germany would aid in Czechoslovakia's 'Return to Europe'. Some commentators attribute Havel's endorsement of German reunification and efforts at Czechoslovak-German reconciliation 'as the cornerstone of his new European foreign policy and of economic integration with the West'.¹¹⁵

On 11 April 1991, Foreign Minister Genscher 'spoke warmly' in Prague of Dienstbier's plans for a European Security Commission which, among other functions, would supplant NATO. The two Foreign Ministers agreed to advance joint proposals at the June CSCE meeting of Foreign Ministers. Germany, it seemed, was 'giving Czechoslovakia substantial backing' in its European proposals.¹¹⁶

Havel and Dienstbier's ideas for restructuring Europe were radical. Consequently, they met much resistance. Their personal auras and credibility in the international community almost certainly gave them

¹¹⁵ Bugajski, *Nations in Turmoil*, p. 204.

¹¹⁶ Susan Greenberg, 'Genscher Backs Prague Initiative', *The Guardian*, 12 April 1991.

larger audiences than their country's size merited or the radical nature of their ideas might have permitted. They also used their abilities, including 'staging', to press their ideas as far as possible. It is fair to say that they created the best conditions possible.

Nevertheless, political developments forced the post-communist Czechoslovak leadership to change the content of their proposals. True, Havel and Dienstbier expected a gradual process of change, much as they undertook in their opposition to communist rule. Throughout his time as Foreign Minister, Dienstbier maintained that the CSCE not only had potential but that it was already being realised. Despite Czechoslovakia's altered policies on European institutions, Dienstbier stressed the importance of new ideas and continued to illustrate the merging of institutions, particularly NATO and the CSCE. For example, at the close of the CSCE Foreign Ministers Council session in Prague on 31 January 1992, he explained:

It is necessary to bring up new ideas. The idea of making use of the experiences of the Atlantic Pact and its logistics and mechanism for the resolution of certain tasks *within the framework of the Helsinki process in only natural during the gradual coming together of European and transatlantic institutions.*

...It is necessary to realize that all these institutions, and not merely some of them, are being transformed at the present time and are seeking ways of cooperating.¹¹⁷

In the end, however, Havel and Dienstbier reverted back to a realpolitik view of Europe. The Czechoslovak hope for the eventual emergence of the CSCE as an effective pan-European security system was ironically dashed at the very time when the CSCE had the greatest potential. Prior to 1990, the CSCE had 'reigned supreme over the realm' of the notional idea of 'Greater Europe'. This was precisely because during the Cold War Greater Europe could only be a fictional idea; but once the potential arose for the CSCE to take on such a role, it had to compete

¹¹⁷ Prague Federal 1 Television Network, 31 January 1992, in *FBIS*, 3 February 1992, p. 8. Emphasis added.

with other institutions.¹¹⁸ It was partly the existence of institutions like NATO which, by presenting itself as fully operational, precluded the success of the CSCE. As the achievement of a pan-European security structure became increasingly unlikely, the Czechoslovak leadership began to stress full NATO membership for the country. Prague thereby contributed to limiting any future success for the CSCE.

In stressing NATO membership, the Czechoslovaks and other Central Europeans reinforced their acceptance of Western institutions as they were, rather than through reform. Instead of working to abolish or transform NATO, it became an 'important factor generally in bringing' these countries into the 'European, or Western, "mainstream"'.¹¹⁹

The final and fatal irony is how the Czechoslovak, and perhaps also the Central European, view of their place in 'Europe' was confounded by the experience of 'Europe' after 1989. Instead of being allowed to return to Europe, permitted to have their historical path reconverge with the Western European, these countries were to be dictated to. Certainly West European institutions have a role as a model for emerging liberal democratic and market-economy polities: they may also have a duty to act a conditioning force on the internal behaviour of these countries. But while the Central Europeans countries believe they understand what 'Europe' is, it is, in the Central European view, the Western European countries that actually have Europe. The experience of Central Europeans is not only that their 'Europeanness' is not recognised, but that in order to become fully European, they have to change themselves. Thus, for the central Europeans, in order to return to Europe, they have had to surrender some of their 'Europeanness'.

¹¹⁸ Victor-Yves Ghebali, 'The July CSCE Helsinki Decisions - A Step in the Right Direction', *NATO Review* Vol. 40, No. 4 (August 1992), p. 3.

¹¹⁹ J.F. Brown, *Hopes and Shadows* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press and London: Longman, 1994), p. 273.

CONCLUSION

THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING IDEAS INTO POLICY

Czechoslovakia [is] a tree which stands most erect where winds from two sides blow upon it. The Czechoslovak people have lived and will live between West and East, uniting the respect of the West for man's individuality with the emphasis of the East on the common good, rather than on the selfishness of the individual.¹

The passage is the close of J.V. Polišíenský's 1947 *History of Czechoslovakia in Outline*, written to advance the status of the country. It illustrates the contention of this thesis that two competing and necessarily related influences have existed in Czechoslovak history. The first is Czechoslovakia's unique geographic location. The second is the belief of its intellectuals and political leaders that the country could make a philosophical contribution to European civilisation. This humanism was partly derived from and also aimed to change the systemic and geopolitical forces that threatened the country. The tension and the symbiosis between these two features of Czechoslovak political and intellectual life are the contours with which its foreign policy was created and executed.

This thesis has concentrated on the interplay of geopolitical pressures and humanist values in post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy. In the same way that Czechoslovak dissidents had a notion of a domestic 'civic' political life, they had what has been termed here a 'civic' foreign policy. The term has been extrapolated from their own writings and statements, and the term civic foreign policy has been used in this study as the encapsulation of those ideas.

As chapter 2 indicated, Czechoslovakia's dissident-leaders did not call their foreign policy 'civic'. Nevertheless, they professed that their pre-1989 beliefs were valid after the Velvet Revolution. Dienstbier

¹ Polišíenský, *History of Czechoslovakia*, p. 131.

expressed disappointment that his dissident essays on international affairs *Snění o Evropě* were not published in Western languages before 1989 because they could have served a basis for discussion for events thereafter.² Vondra argued that what the 1985 'utopian' Czechoslovak dissident proposal in the Prague Appeal calling for the unification of Germany became 'reality'.³ In 1992, Havel confirmed that post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy 'should grow and, more important, continue to grow from' the same morality as Czechoslovakia's pre-1989 dissidence.⁴ Chapter 2 also demonstrated that Havel was thoroughly conscious that analysts would study every word he said and wrote. This thesis has therefore accepted Havel's challenge.

This conclusion will first review the ideas constituting a civic foreign policy. It will then consider its successes before turning to the problems and constraints of translating these ideas into policy.

THE IDEAS OF A CIVIC FOREIGN POLICY

The foremost element of a civic foreign policy, as indicated by Havel's comment, is the centrality of morality and truth. Individual responsibility was central to this approach, and everyone had a duty to think and act within truth and act with morality. This in itself would be a source of power. As Havel argued in 'Power of the Powerless', living in truth could challenge and ultimately overcome the structures of the domestic totalitarian regime. By extension, the rigid and unjust international order of Yalta would also eventually be transformed. Several Czechoslovak dissident intellectuals, like Šemička, Šabata and especially Dienstbier,

² Interview, 13 September 1995.

³ 'A View from the Castle', p. 12.

⁴ Havel, *Summer Meditations*, pp. 98-9.

considered how to end the armed polarisation of Europe and the centrality of the two military blocs to European political life. They advanced an anti-power politics approach to international affairs to negate the traditional uses of power in the international system. Their views of domestic and international politics were paralleled by the need to ensure that the security and power of one could not derive from the insecurity and powerlessness of another. Havel confirmed the validity of this approach in 1991 when he wrote unequivocally that Communism was defeated by thought and human dignity and that, consequently, the world was transformed not by weapons or force, but by the strength of free spirit, the power of the word, and the power of the truthful word.⁵ A civic foreign policy involves the reimagination of how power is, and ought to be, distributed in the international system.

Similarly, as the dissidents sought a revitalisation of domestic politics, so too did they foresee popular participation and representation in international political life. The dissident-leadership believed that democracy would make foreign policy dealings easier. Civic politics was thus an organically democratic practice which advanced selfless and cosmopolitan values pursued by virtue of their universal value rather than for individual gain.

Drawing from its sense of morality, a civic foreign policy possessed a redemptive quality. Shortly after becoming President, Havel said: 'there is something good in each person, whether the person in question is a justly sentenced prisoner or a tyrannical warder'. He was confident of success in 'creating an atmosphere that evokes better qualities in people'.⁶

⁵ Havel, *Letní přemítání*, pp. 98 and 97.

⁶ Prague Domestic Service, 11 January 1990, in FBIS, 12 January 1990, p. 16.

But truth and the creation of 'better qualities' could not be achieved, according to the civic foreign policy, without first dealing with historical injustices. This was done by apology, and Havel apologised for wrongdoings for which neither he nor many of the existing Czechoslovak population were responsible. Thus, he apologised to the German people for the postwar expulsion of the Sudeten Germans and to NATO for the lies his predecessors had propagated about the organisation. He argued that Europe as a whole had to make amends for the costs to the world of its previous wars so that, in return, 'its own security might radiate peace into the whole world'. But because a civic foreign policy relies on truth and common standards of morality, it would expect apologies to be reciprocal and therefore to provide the basis for new relations. Hence, the Soviet denunciation of its 1968 intervention provided the grounds, in the Czechoslovak view, for new relations.

The combined importance of morality and common responsibility in a civic foreign policy means that it must concern itself with issues transcending national interest. Post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy demonstrated this as Havel pursued his pre-1989 preoccupations with man's alienation and what he termed the 'commonality of crisis'. He rejected nationalism, commercialism, and overconsumption and, despite the problems facing Czechoslovakia's transition, was concerned about general underdevelopment and environmental degradation elsewhere. He saw all crises, whether regional such as the Yugoslav conflict and East European ecological predicament, or larger crises as part of a universal crisis and responsibility. He supported political dissidents elsewhere, nominating persecuted Burmese activist Aung San Suu Kyi for the Nobel Peace Prize and inviting the Dalai Lama to Prague despite the threats of economic sanctions by China. He offered to negotiate between the Palestinians and Israelis, and to find 'a nice little chateau' in which to host a summit

between Bush and Gorbachev.⁷ As a matter of principle, post-Communist Czechoslovakia was quick to restore relations with both Israel and the Vatican.⁸

SUCSESSES OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S CIVIC FOREIGN POLICY

The ideals in post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy did not harm its overall success. Rather, an unintended consequence of Havel's preoccupation with morality, but doubtless in combination with his personality, they advanced the image of Czechoslovakia abroad. For example, upon hearing Havel's address to a joint session the US Congress, one Senator proclaimed 'If I could speak like him I could run for God'.⁹ A *Washington Post* editorial wrote that Havel's speech to Congress 'provided stunning evidence that his country, far from being only an inheritor - let alone borrower - of the European intellectual tradition, is a prime source of it'.¹⁰ So successful was Havel that some felt that in 'the United States, Czechoslovakia suffers from its own wonderful publicity - the exhilaration that President Vaclav Havel aroused in Congress, the crowd of celebrities that turned out for him in New York, the stories about golden Prague becoming the absolutely essential trip for everybody in the know'.¹¹

⁷ Prague Domestic Service, 28 February 1990, in *FBIS*, 1 March 1990, p. 11.

⁸ Jiri Pehe, 'Diplomatic Relations with Israel To Be Resumed', *Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, No. 5 (2 February 1990), pp. 6-9; and Peter Martin, 'Czechoslovakia and the Vatican Restoring Relations', *ibid.*, Vol. 1, No. 12 (23 March 1990), pp. 8-11.

⁹ Cited by Democratic Representative Robert J. Mrazek, chairman and (sole member) of the House's Czechoslovakian-American Caucus, *International Herald Tribune*, 23 February 1990.

¹⁰ Reprinted in *International Herald Tribune*, 23 February 1990.

¹¹ A.M. Rosenthal, *International Herald Tribune*, 11 May 1990.

Returning from his February 1990 visit to Washington, he stood on the same balcony of the Kinský Palace where Gottwald had stood in February 1948 when he proclaimed the advent of socialist Czechoslovakia. This time, however, Havel pronounced 'Czechoslovakia is the most popular country in America'.¹² To the extent that Hans Morgenthau was right to call diplomacy 'the brains of national power', Havel put this to fullest use, and symbolism was an important part of his diplomatic packaging.

The image of Czechoslovakia may thus have been elevated abroad. For Vondra, Czechoslovakia lost nothing in pursuing the kind of foreign policy that it did. The only failure he mentioned was the continued war in Yugoslavia,¹³ a conflict which actors better equipped than Czechoslovakia failed to resolve. In other areas, the humanist values of post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy did not ultimately harm national interests. Havel proved correct in his assessment of the consequences for both Czechoslovakia and Europe of German unification. Domestically, while the economic absorption of East German into the Federal Republic meant the write-off of debts and the loss of trade, the overall impact on Czechoslovakia of unification itself was small. Havel's only qualification on the process of unification - that it be done democratically - was subjected to certain criticism in chapter 4. But most observers ultimately agree that unification occurred with widespread discussion among major powers and Havel was satisfied with the process.

The Soviet troop withdrawal from Czechoslovakia was widely, and rightly, considered a major foreign policy success. But it was not the result of civic values. In fact, as chapter 5 suggested, the Soviet Union did not recognise, let alone respond to the idea of mutual respect. The Soviet Union did much to obstruct the negotiations; some of its officials

¹² Cited in Edward Lucas, 'Havel Returns from US as the Conquering Hero', *The Independent*, 24 February 1990.

¹³ Interview.

retracted or qualified the apology for the 1968 intervention. The Soviet Union neither offered an apology for ecological damage nor consented to full financial compensation. Nevertheless, Czechoslovakia's approach to the Soviet Union was indicative of the leadership's belief in possibilities (in combination with a measure of necessity); it refused to accept that Soviet control over Central Europe was a preordained and unchangeable fact. Moreover, just as the Czechoslovaks did not have every demand satisfactorily met by the Soviet Union, Moscow also failed to extract all that it wanted from Prague.

Similar thinking on the nature and distribution of power was evident in Havel's policy towards Germany. While Czechoslovakia risked at least as much as other countries from German unification, not only did Havel refuse to fear unification, but he also saw it, in keeping with Czechoslovak dissident views, as a prerequisite for the unification of Europe. And while Czechoslovakia risked 'Germanisation' through market forces rather than military prowess, Havel's government used the surge of German investment to prod other countries into investing.

For Havel, the meaningful measure of 'success' of his civic foreign policy would be the extent to which he acted truthfully and morally. By these terms, he must be considered successful. While his tactics had to change, his belief in morality remained above considerations of national interest. For example, he risked antagonising the Soviet Union by endorsing the presence of the three Baltic Republics at the Paris CSCE meeting, and he invited the Dalai Lama to Prague despite jeopardising valuable trade with China.

His universalist values often contained elements of self-interest as well. His plea to the US to help the Soviet Union was made in the context of aiding Central Europe by ensuring it a continued market for its partially-competitive goods and in order to retain the Soviet Union's connections to democratic and market societies.

Havel's apology to Germany has been seen by many as a strictly tactical move to gain Bonn's support for Czechoslovak membership of Western institutions. This thesis rejects this interpretation, and points out that a moral foreign policy does not necessarily preclude the attainment of national interests. Havel cannot be faulted if, in acting according to his conscience, his actions served Czechoslovak interests.

Similarly, while a civic foreign policy ultimately aimed to remove power politics as a feature of international life, Havel blended idealistic humanism with the need to respect force. In the case of the Gulf War, he specified that aggression had to be countered with force and committed Czechoslovak troops to the liberation of Kuwait.¹⁴ As much as he idealised the restructuring of European security, leading ultimately to pacific union, it did not prevent him from recognising the necessity of a viable security guarantee from NATO.

Thus, Czechoslovakia's civic foreign policy contained pragmatic elements which contributed to its success. Nevertheless, these were insufficient to offset the many problems of implementation that it faced.

CONSTRAINTS ON A CIVIC FOREIGN POLICY

Czechoslovakia's civic foreign policy encountered numerous problems which forced the leadership to retreat from its original ideas. The very making of foreign policy forced a retreat from these values. The Czechoslovak leadership spoke of a people's diplomacy. Observers and participants in the foreign policy process, however, have maintained that foreign policy was concentrated in the Foreign Ministry. In chapter 3, the thesis examined two hypotheses. The first argued that, contrary to the

¹⁴ The Czechoslovak contingent numbered 200 hundred but being an anti-chemical warfare unit, it was meant to offer expertise the coalition required. The Czechoslovaks were among only six armies that penetrated Iraqi territory.

standard opinion, foreign policy decision-making and implementation were not in practice exclusively in the Ministry's control. Foreign policy, especially in its outcomes, was influenced and even distorted by several competing and entrenched interests. These included continued arms sales; energy production in terms of nuclear power stations and the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam; Slovak efforts to generate its own foreign policy; and initiatives taken by the Presidential Palace of which the Foreign Ministry was unaware. As a result of these competing influences, the Foreign Ministry was forced to qualify and retract some of its earlier policy statements.

The related second assertion advanced regarding civic foreign policy-making was that these distortions of policy were made by entities antithetical to a civic foreign policy. The dissidents were concerned about the power of megamachinery and the alienation of man as a result of modernisation. The influences that ultimately influenced the civic foreign policy, however, were Communist-era nuclear power plants, arms factories and massive hydroelectric installations. Various interests in Czechoslovakia were served by the continued sale of arms to rogue countries, even if the sales contradicted the ethics of a civic foreign policy. The point is that these influences were generally unforeseen and forced changes in the content of Czechoslovakia's foreign policy.

Moreover, it soon became evident that the dissident leadership's outlook was not synonymous with that of the population. The Czechoslovak leadership saw the righting of historical wrongs as the only way to allow new policy to begin. This view appeared extreme to much of the population, and even created contradictions. Thus, Havel was concerned about individual responsibility and, in the case of the Germans, rejected the idea of collective guilt. Nevertheless, by making an apology on behalf of Czechoslovaks for the expulsion of Sudeten Germans, he was implying

collective Czechoslovak guilt.¹⁵ It is almost certain that extending the apology encouraged Sudeten German claims on Czechoslovakia for the restoration of property. Havel himself recognised the limitations of apology when he called for the process of mutual apology between Czechs and Germans to cease. Nevertheless, the difference between his attitude and the response of public opinion indicates that the civic foreign policy could not accommodate both morality and public opinion.

The Czechoslovak leadership believed too strongly that the Soviet apology would create the foundation for new relations. However, demonstrations by ordinary people in 1990 for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops indicated that the Czechoslovak population did not share his view of the practical importance of the apology. Soviet indifference to Czechoslovak demands demonstrates the limitation of apology in foreign policy. Regardless of the practical difficulties of withdrawing Soviet troops quickly, Soviet representatives were also uncooperative in talks on the ecological damage caused by their forces. Similarly, the Soviets cut back oil supplies in 1990 without even the diplomatic courtesy of first informing, or later, discussing the issue with Czechoslovak ministers.

Not only did popular sentiment have to give precedence to dissident ideas (such as the apology to the Sudeten Germans) in foreign policy, but the grassroots representation that one might have expected was also not forthcoming. Agreements marking regional cooperation called for the creation of a new ethos of mutual tolerance and understanding. Civic initiatives, such as 'cross-border diplomacy', were stunted by central governments which delayed the opening of frontiers and retained high

¹⁵ I am not challenging the Czechoslovak dissident idea that an apology had to be made. In fact, all former dissidents interviewed on this question remained adamant that the apology had to be extended. But a distinction can be made between a collective Czechoslovak apology made by the President, and the individual apologies made by dissidents and exiles.

tariffs on Central European goods.¹⁶ Contrary to their expectations, Czechoslovakia's leaders discovered that democracy in Central Europe did not make the resolution of regional issues easier.¹⁷ The policies of Klaus as Prime Minister did much to scuttle the entire prospect of regional cooperation. Ironically, perhaps the only case of grassroots representation in Czechoslovak foreign policy occurred when Havel was forced to reverse his policy of not dealing with unofficial Sudeten German lobby groups.

A civic foreign policy called for the respect of legality which meant that existing legal structures would have to be respected even if they were objectionable, just as the dissidents had worked within the laws the Communist regimes had issued. Thus, the post-Communist Czechoslovak government pledged allegiance to the Warsaw Pact and Havel ordered prearranged joint military exercises to be held. Similarly, the new government reversed its decision to expel Soviet bloc international organisations because they had not broken existing law. While Havel was adamant that Sudeten German claims for the restoration of land and citizenship would not be met, Czechoslovakia's drive for membership of the EC meant that, ironically, Community provisions would give Sudeten Germans the right to live and buy property in Czechoslovakia.

In advancing its ideas for a new Europe, Czechoslovakia was restrained by the diplomatic power and interests of other countries, and Havel was forced to repackage and qualify the meaning and content of his proposals. While done with flair, Havel contradicted his initial views in his address to the US Congress. And, to the extent that Czechoslovak ideas

¹⁶ Jan B. de Weydenthal, 'Cross-Border Diplomacy in East Central Europe', *RFE/RL Research Report* Vol. 1, no. 42 (23 October 1992)' and 'Cross-Border Cooperation in East Central Europe, *ibid.*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (14 January 1994), pp. 32-5.

¹⁷ For example, Dienstbier expected that sensitive issues in relations with Hungary such as the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam and minorities would be come 'relatively easy to solve' by virtue of each country becoming democratic. MTI, 10 January 1990, in *FBIS*, 12 January 1990, p. 17.

for the new Europe were adopted, particularly the enhancement of the CSCE, those ideas were implemented by German diplomats.

Just as Havel had to reformulate the content of his foreign policy to suit his major partners, he also had to dispense with many of the unusual and dramatic features of its form that he first adopted. He engaged in symbolism, but this presumed that his interlocutors shared his symbolic references. His personal overtures to Gorbachev clearly failed; and Thatcher and Mitterand declined Havel's intended symbolism of having them coming to Prague to mark the anniversary of Munich Agreement. Even the symbolism that he expressly attributed to the ambassadorial appointment of Slánský to Moscow was later categorically rejected by Dienstbier, who stressed that the selection was done strictly on a professional basis. A civic foreign policy need not have dramatic features, and this was doubtless Havel's personal contribution; what is evident is that if the form of a civic foreign policy does not adjust to common diplomatic conventions, it will be misunderstood.

Of all the problems of translating Czechoslovakia's civic ideas into foreign policy, none was as profound as the effect of geopolitics. In regional relations, Havel demonstrated an awareness of the utility and limitations of geography, and he crafted some of his regional initiatives to ensure Czechoslovak membership. In other respects, however, geographical considerations worked against the leadership. For example, Czechoslovakia feared the consequences of a close union with large Poland; when Czechoslovakia broke apart, regional relations floundered because Poland was consequently even bigger.¹⁸

The largest casualty to geopolitics in post-Communist Czechoslovak foreign policy was its central aim: the remaking of Europe by transforming and then collapsing the two military alliances into a

¹⁸ Interview with Fialková-Němcová.

revamped CSCE. This was defeated by Czechoslovakia's perception of a Soviet threat and the need to retain NATO, and to seek membership in it. The Czechoslovak leadership adopted the language of geopolitics to justify its claim to membership in NATO. The strength of Havel's conviction and determination to recreate Europe makes his retreat from the initial idea of eliminating NATO remarkable. The constraining effects of geopolitics are well summarised in Dienstbier's reply to the question what he would have done differently in his foreign policy. He answered that there is always geography and that results come down to the country's size.¹⁹

The real outcome of Czechoslovakia's civic foreign policy may not yet be known. Just as dissident thinking on power in the Soviet system was largely ignored before 1989 but vindicated thereafter, so it may be with their thinking on international relations. In domestic affairs, the dissidents identified that the Communist system rested on an ideal.²⁰ They also outlined the programme by which to challenge, and ultimately, as they believed, undermine the basis of that ideal. This was a gradual, but cumulative, process whereby the individual re-recognised reality, which would in turn increase the capacity to influence reality.²¹ Dissident literature has now been said to 'answer questions of tactics and strategy'.²²

¹⁹ Interview with Dienstbier.

²⁰ This is not suggest that it was a laudable ideal. Dienstbier's starting point is that European civilisation rests on ideals, even if they involve violence. Similarly, he contended that power was never used for its own sake, but in pursuit of some ideal. *Snění o Evropě* and interview.

²¹ This is the logical reversal of Havel's observation that 'When we lose touch with reality, we inevitably lose the capacity to influence reality effectively. And the weaker that capacity is, the greater our illusion that we have effectively influenced reality'. Havel, 'On Evasive Thinking', pp. 14-5.

²² For example, Knud Erik Jørgensen, 'The End of Anti-politics in Central Europe', in Paul G. Lewis (ed.), *Democracy and Civil Society in Eastern Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 44.

If dissident analysis and tactics were even partly responsible for the unexpected Revolutions of 1989, then their contributions to thinking on international affairs must be given serious consideration. Havel has compared the historical importance of the changes brought by the collapse of Communism to the fall of the Roman empire'. He has cautioned that 'to build a new world on the ruins of communism might be as extended and complex a process as the creation of a Christian Empire'.²³ With hindsight, domestic civil society as envisaged and advocated by dissidents was central to undermining the Communist regimes which had hitherto been believed to be unshakable. The force of dissident ideas, however, ushered in immense change. Despite the overwhelming impact of these ideas, however, this thesis has illustrated the problems of translating them into policy and sustaining them.

While students of International Relations may observe that 'intellectual moods' come and go,²⁴ it would be inaccurate to suggest this of Czechoslovak dissident civic politics. A caveat runs through Havel's writings: while he believed that morality would ultimately triumph, the tangible results of a moral existence would be gradual. He saw the moral measures he advised Dubček to take in 1969 as having been realised by the events of 1989. If this is applied to his ideas on international relations, the full implications and achievements of Czechoslovakia's civic foreign policy might not yet be appreciable. In the shortterm, however, that foreign policy has had to conform and adapt to existing patterns.

Czechoslovakia always suffered in the international system. Producers of ideas about international security, Czechoslovaks suffered

²³ Havel, 'Post-Communist Nightmare', p. 9.

²⁴ See, especially, Ian Clark, *The Hierarchy of States: Reform and Resistance in the International Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), *passim*, and pp. 208-9.

partly because of the ideals they attempted to universalise, from the Hussites to the Prague Spring. But because of their strategic location, the Czechoslovaks were forced to be consumers, and ultimately victims, of international security. Czechoslovakia could not escape the effects of geopolitics.

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PART 18: MEDIA SOURCES

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Lidové noviny

Literární noviny

Mezinárodní politika

Mladá fronta dnes

Mladý svět

Narodná obrana

Občanský deník

Pravda

Respekt

Rudé právo

(b) Foreign Print Media

Business Central Europe

The Christian Science Monitor

The Daily Telegraph

The Economist

The Financial Times

The Globe and Mail

The Guardian

The International Herald Tribune

Le Monde

Le Monde Diplomatique

The New York Review of Books

The New York Times

The Observer

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The Times

The Toronto Star

The Washington Post

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BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts: Eastern Europe*.

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PART 19: INTERVIEWS

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Jiří Dienstbier, Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, December 1989-1992, 13 September 1995

Markéta Fialková-Němcová, Czechoslovak Ambassador to Poland, 1990-1994, 5 September 1994, 14 September 1995

Miloslav Had, Head, Policy and Planning Department, Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1990-1992, 30 August 1994, 12 September 1995

Vladimír Handl, specialist of Czech-German relations, Institute of International Relations, 5 September 1994

Miroslav Kusý, leading Slovak dissident and human rights lawyer,
currently UNESCO Professorial Chair at Comenius University,
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Otto Pick, Director, Institute for International Relations, September 1995

Petr Pithart, Czech Prime Minister, 1990-1992, 9 September 1994

Milada Polišenská, diplomatic historian, Institute of International Relations,
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Vilém Prečan, Director of the Institute for Contemporary History, Academy
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Jaroslav Šedivý, Czechoslovak Ambassador to Paris, 1990-1992, 12
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Jan Valeška, Head, English Language Section, Radio Prague, International,
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